

AUSTRIA

Edited by Andy Taylor

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No 132	CONTENTS	Winter 2000
Editorial		2
More "On the covers "		4
The build-up to WIPA (part 4)		5
Notes on Publications		9
Questions and Answers		11
Letters to the Editor		12
Christkindl Covers?		14
125 years of Registration Labels (concluded)		16
Lies, damned lies & statistics: do we really need a library?		34
5Rpf & 6Rpf postcards		37
Obituaries: Bill Dennis; Walter Sexton		42
Dr Renner - 50th anniversary of his death		44
New members		47
The Danube		48
Notes from Yorkfest		65
POAS supplements 197 and 198		70
Bark, bark		72
Further thoughts about Ferchenbauer 2000		76

Manchester Meeting Dates for 2000-2001

2 Dec 2000	Manchester	Austria and Italy – John Giblin
13 Jan 2001	Manchester	Ostmark – Brian Madely
10 Feb 2001	Manchester	Newspaper Stamps – Andy Taylor
3 Mar 2001	London	Joint Meeting
7 Apr 2001	Manchester	Postal Stationery – Henry White
12 May 2001	Manchester	Hesshaimer – Arthur Godden

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Editorial 132

By Andy Taylor

Welcome to the first Journal of the Austrian Philatelic Society!

There seems no necessity to change the title of the journal, nor to begin another sequence of issue numbers, so the volume you are reading is issue number 132 of "AUSTRIA". And welcome to the London and Manchester Local Groups!

I read in Die Briefmarke that a new definitive series will be introduced on 1 Jan 2002, to coincide with the change to the Euro. The design theme is "Austria, the land for holidays" and the stamps will feature touristic views of Austrian scenery. The ablest designers such as Adolf Tuma are already at work, and drafts show snow-covered mountain farms and Fleckvieh reclining on improbably steep slopes. The arrangements for mixed schilling-euro franking and for exchange of unused stamps from 1947 onwards also seem philatelically satisfactory. One design decision will cause some eyebrow-fluttering - the country will be described as ÖSTERREICH without the present Republic. This gives the artists more freedom, and anyway the fact that Austria is a republic, not a monarchy, is perhaps adequately established by now.

Dates for your diary: Stampexes (Stampi? Stampes?) are scheduled to be held in Islington on 28 Feb - 4 Mar 2001; 19 - 23 Sep 2001; and 27 Feb - 3 Mar 2002. Midpex is on 30 June 2001 at Tile Hill, Coventry.

Technology for its own sake? The Australian Post Office created a design for a stamp to commemorate gold medal winners at the forthcoming Olympics, and laid in stocks of paper pre-perforated in sheetlets of ten. When an Australian won a gold medal, her or his photo was electronically sent to the studio, turned into an image to fit the design, and sent (again electronically) to each of the capital cities of the six federal states. There it was digitally printed, and was available from noon the day after the medal was awarded. Offset stock followed within three days. As each sheetlet carries the imprint of the state where it was printed, that's seven different sheetlets per gold medal - and Australia won sixteen... I hope the Austrian Post never follows suit

The Honorary Auctioneer tells me that if the Society wishes to have more Auctions, members must submit some material to sell His cupboard is "hellish dark and smells of cheese", but contains nothing for Auction 62.

I've been mounting my summer acquisitions, and noting that almost every Postal History specimen is liberally annotated with philatelist's scribblings such as a price (always lower than I had to pay!), a packet reference number, a catalogue reference, the signature of some long-forgotten expert, or an arrow pointing to some feature. So far most have come off with careful use of a plastic

eraser, but is it a sensible idea to write such stuff in the first place? This is not the same as the equally-common use of an item for its recipient to write progress notes or shopping lists: these are Social History!

Österreichische Post AG has announced that, after more than three years of price stability, it plans “to bring the charges for postal services into line with the general cost trend” from 1 January 2001. The price of a standard letter at home and within Europe, the most commonly-posted item, will remain unchanged at seven Schillings. However, I read elsewhere that they propose to abolish the inland postcard 6½ Schilling rate, rearrange the weight steps for letters, and raise the cost of a private postbox from 10 Schillings per month to 100. At the same time, they added, the price adjustments will be accompanied by the introduction of a simpler charging structure based on distribution and logistics requirements and especially on the machine readability of addresses. The postal company faces the task of getting ready for privatization and the forthcoming deregulation of the market and the expected fierce competition.

I’ve recently come across some interesting books, for those whose interests in Austria extend to its politics. “The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History, 1848-1938” by William M. Johnston, University of California Press, 1972, includes accounts of ill-treatment of foreigners in Austria in 1914. Misha Glennie has published “The Balkans” (Granta) to build on his excellent “The Fall of Yugoslavia” (Penguin, 1992); he tries to explain the complex history of that ill-fated area and the folk memories of brutal ill-treatment which still motivate its inhabitants in ways which most western Europeans cannot comprehend. And “Hitler and the Forgotten Nazis: A History of Austrian National Socialism”, by Bruce F. Pauley (published in 1981 by The University of North Carolina Press) mentions the (in)famous Wöllersdorf Detention Camp. Those wishing to learn from history can also visit the newly-opened Holocaust memorial in Vienna’s Judenplatz (where at No. 244 Mozart composed *Così fan Tutti*) and the ruins of the synagogue destroyed in 1421 which lie beneath it. Not all of the Austrian political parties chose to attend the opening ceremony.

Speakers Wanted! The Association of British Philatelic Societies (of which we are a member) wants to update its list of speakers prepared to travel to other societies and give displays. If you are willing to do this, please write to our Hon Sec (Gordon Rogers, address on inside front cover) saying what you can speak on and where you are prepared to travel to. Payment is likely to be the same as we offer, ie honour and glory only.

WIPA2006? In that year the association of Austrian stamp & coin dealers is 100 years old, it’s 125 years since the first WIPA in 1881, and it’s the 250th anniversary of the birth of Mozart.. perhaps adequate excuses, should such be needed, for a miniWIPA?

MORE ON THE COVERS

By Andy Taylor

In issue 130 on pages 7-10 I wrote an article discussing the items illustrated on the covers. Unfortunately, in concatenating the information from the experts I also confused it, in particular by omitting a line and transposing two figures from John Whiteside's letter.

On page 7, the last two paragraphs should read as follows:

From 1/8/1852, the rate to Great Britain was 7 silbergroschen (which converts to 21krCM) per (Zoll)loth and transit was via the exchange office at Aachen, through Belgium to Ostend, then via packet-boat to London. From Austria the Verein postal rate to Aachen was 9krCM per Zoll-loth and a further 12 kr was payable, making a total of 21 kreuzer (or 7 sgr). In accordance with normal Austrian practice, this was applied in stamps on the front. The registration fee was also 7 sgr, comprising the Verein fee of 2 sgr + British fee of 6d or 5 sgr, so a further 21 kr in stamps was applied, as was normal practice, to the back.

For a short period from 1/11/1858 to 30/6/1859, under the new currency, the charge for a registered letter would have been 70 kreuzer ÖW. From 1/7/1859, the charges were greatly reduced: the postage became 5sgr and the registered fee was the Verein's fee of 2sgr only. Thus the fee for a registered letter from Austria was 35kr (25 + 10). It is not really true to say that the British fee was dropped, as the treaty stipulated that the parties should pay their own fee only. So mail from Great Britain that was registered was paid at the British fee of 6d.

Furthermore,

In the paragraph beginning "The Franco-Prussian war saw the service via France suspended in July 1870", the British fee of 4d was payable on mail **from** Great Britain, not mail to it.

In the paragraph beginning "Now to return to the 1857 letter", the weiterfranco calculations are the Austrian post office calculating what to charge the customer for postal services outside the **Verein** boundaries, not the Austrian boundaries.

And the table on page 9 should be:

Postage to Aachen	(3sgr)	9krCM
Postage Aachen to Great Britain	(4sgr)	12krCM
Total postage, applied in stamps on the front	(7sgr)	21krCM
Registration fee to Aachen	(2sgr)	6krCM
Registration fee Aachen to Great Britain - 6d	(5sgr)	15krCM
Total Registration fee, applied in stamps on the back	(7sgr)	21krCM

“The build-up to WIPA 2000 (continued) by Nick Harty”

This article does not exist in electronic format.

The text follows.

This cover is item 37 which was carried by the historic diesel train 5145 “Blauen Blitz” travelling from Wiener Neustadt to Wien Südbahnhof which stopped at Pinkafeld to pick up these covers. The destination was UN in Vienna before being delivered through normal Post channels. They were used to raise funds for SOS Kinderdorf Burgenland. The 5.50 schilling adhesive stamp used was [ANK 2161]. The special cancel was not available c.t.o.

The thirty-eighth item is a registered first day cover of the fourth WIPA block issued on 21st January 2000. The block has only three units, with a WIPA logo completing the block. The designs of the three WIPA stamps are those issued in 1997, 1998 and 1999. [ANK 2253, 2300 and 2325]. Note these three stamps are not the same and are numbered [ANK 2335, 2336 and 2337] and can be differentiated by the date 2000 beneath the frame of each design. The special cancel was used at the Open Class philatelic exhibition at Floridsdorf.

The thirty-ninth item is a Black Print of the miniature block produced for the fourth WIPA 2000 issued on 21st January 2000.

The fortieth item is a one day entrance ticket for WIPA. An addition is the 10 schilling souvenir sheetlet only available free with an entry ticket. The sheetlet could not be purchased on its own. The ticket cost 80 schillings including the sheetlet. Note that the reference number is the same as the ticket although this is a rarity since the sheetlets are numbered consecutively as are the day and season tickets.

The forty-first item is a season ticket which cost 150 schillings and also included the 10 schilling sheetlet. The sheetlet is cancelled with a souvenir cancellation only available with the purchase of the ticket. The special post office in the Basilikenhaus Schönlaterngasse used a similar design but reversed in a square frame on the first day of issue 21st January 2000.

The forty-second item is a commemorative cover featuring one of the major sponsors of WIPA, The Austrian State Printing Works Vienna. The three

schilling stamp [ANK 1651] was issued 18th September 1979. The 4 schilling stamp [ANK 1732] was issued 7th May 1982. The commemorative cancel was used on 22nd January at a special post office at the Haus der Begegnung 1210.

The forty-third item is a souvenir white card commemorating the 150th anniversary of the birth of Austrian stamps issued at the one-day exhibition held at a special post office, Nordbergstrasse A-1091. The 6.50 schilling stamp [ANK 2326] issued 22nd October 1999 is cancelled with the special cancel at the post office that day.

The forty-fourth item is an airmail cover sent to Bangkok 2000 on 24th March on a goodwill flight flown by Lauda-Air. Note the Bangkok arrival cancel 25th March 2000. The franking applied is for 94 Eurocents [equivalent to 14 schillings] and was printed by a Francotyp Postalia machine. The F in front of the validation number indicates this.

The forty-fifth item is a balloon-post cover produced to raise funds for Pro Juventute. The 56th balloon flight was on 26th May and this cover carried by balloon, OE-ZMR. The cancel was applied only to flown covers and not available c.t.o.

The forty-sixth item is also a balloon post cover carried on the same day 26th May 2000 but by a different balloon, OE-MZL. Note the different entry point into the post office system at GROSS-ENZERSDORF 2301. Again, as with the previous cover the cachet was only applied to the flown cover.

The forty-seventh item is a picture post card of an aerial view of the Austria Centre. The 5 schilling stamp [ANK 1909] was issued on 24th April 1987 for the official opening of the Austria Centre. On the reverse side is an additional 50 groschen stamp, cancelled by a roller slogan, to make up the rate for a postcard. The front is a hand cancel from the special bus Post office outside the centre.

spacer page

spacer page

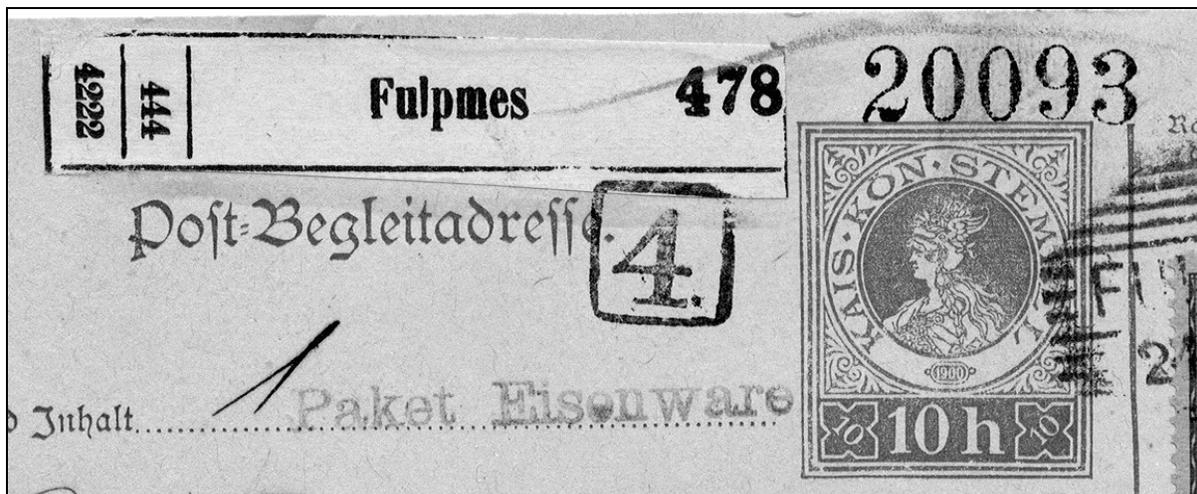
NOTES from publications en route to the Library.

By Andy Taylor

Die Briefmarke

Issue 8/2000: Special air & balloon flights; ANK catalogue on CD; U.N. News; postal history of Maria Trost; Gmund refugee camp; an unusual Postage Due item; Censorship in Austria 1914-1918 [useful overview]; the normal literature reviews, new issues, special cancels & book reviews; and a photo of Prof Zimmerl in an ASCGB tie!

Issue 9/2000: Positioning on letters of stamps in 1850; WIPA souvenir block with missing serial number; Austrian postal activities in the Holy Land; Taxquadrat and Gebührenfeld [see example below]; Jules Scheyli.



[This example is the despatch label stuck on a parcel card; the Taxquadrat and Gebührenfeld are the small vertical numbers at the left. Similar labels from elsewhere have them on the right. They are used to calculate the tarif.]

Issue 10/2000: Phila-Graz 2000! 75 years of Phil. Gesell. Graz; 125 years of post office at Graz-Murvorstadt; Dipl-Ing Rainer; Thielk's WWI Censor catalogue.

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Militaria Austriaca Philatelia.

Issue 188: plans for MilPhila2000; WIPA reports; the Pirotte collection of Austrian Naval photos.

Issue 189: colourful cover; three new books (see below); bookstall & reviews; report of their week-long meeting; the 'prevented' fieldpost 1967 (the Army were 'rendering assistance' to guards on Italian border during unrest in Südtirol); KuK fieldpost, a 10pp study by P Högar in 1923; ditto by K Höss in 2000; Karlfonds FDCs and Friedl.

Item 187A: "Die k.u.k. Feldpost zu Beginn des 1. Weltkrieges" [by H Riedel]. 115pp A4, in German, colour cover, many illustrations & maps. Covers the initial phase of WWI. Army & postal organisation; contemporary documents; lists of which FPO was attached to what, when etc.

Item 187B: "Deutsche Kriegsgefangene in französischem Gewarsam" [by F H Sturzeis]. Around 85 un-numbered pp, A4, in German, many B/W illustrations and maps. Discusses the postal arrangements for the million German & Austrian POWs in camps located in France and her North African possessions. Extensive lists of camps. The review in Issue 189 says, I think, that Austrian POWs could enlist in the French Foreign Legion, and that a battalion formed part of the Allied occupying forces in the Tirol.

Item 189B: "Die Feldpost der Militärseelsorge der österr. -ung Armee im 1. Weltkrieg" [by H Sahlender]. 60pp A4, in German, colour cover, many illustrations. Describes the postal arrangements of the army chaplains in WWI, from all denominations and faiths.

These excellently-produced items are priced at 110/150, 80/100, 110/150 ATS [plus p&p] to members/others while stocks last; it may be possible to obtain copies and those interested should tell the Editor SBVM (ASAP!).

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Feld- und Zensurpost 1914-18

Issue 62: WIPA was worthwhile!; they have 211 members from over 10 countries; Q&A; Newspapers & Fieldpost; the Karlfonds saga; "Rainer II" (fieldpost cancels handbook)?

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Österreich e.V.

Issue 51: How long was the Posthorn series valid?; privately-forwarded letters in 1850; 'OSCAR' sale of Levant material; the OPAL system; book reviews

Wiener Ganzsachen F u P-Verein.

Issue 3/2000: Postage rates from Austria to Brazil in 1946-1948 (by H O Pollak); obscure 1919 frankings; "changed phone number" cards no longer free.

Czechout

Issue 3/2000 (their 100th!): Austrian cancel commemorating the 1-day issue by Czechoslovakia for Carpatho-Ukraine; 100th anniversary of the Prague pneumatic mail system [which is still in constant use, connecting businesses, banks, hospitals etc as well as Post Offices - it's difficult to send cash or medical specimens by email!]; meeting notes etc.

New Additions to the Library List

The Librarian follows a policy of assigning full library listings only to those items which have actually reached him, as opposed to those "in transit". Items 322 onwards have recently been added to the "supplementary list", which is printed in this issue. We are looking into the most cost-effective way of updating and distributing paper copies of the full list; or you can have the current version at any time on www.kitzbuhel.demon.co.uk/austamps/library.



Questions...

Unusual cancel

This cancel is (shakily) traced from a postcard franked 5Sch50 and sent airmail from Vienna to Colorado on 20th June 1958. Has anyone any information on such cancels? How is the number derived - it could be 4pm on the despatch date, but what would happen with a 2-digit month: there is no room for the extra digit!



What was it for?

On 28 September 1916, a 10 Kronen stamp was issued (ANK203). What could it be used for? From 1 October 1916 the basic letter rate was 15 Heller for 20 grams plus 5 Heller for each subsequent 20 gram - so you could have posted a 3.96 Kilogram letter (a breeze block?). Or, you could have sent a Wertbrief weighing 70 grams and containing 28,000 Kronen in banknotes (as illustrated in colour on the cover of ArGe Feld u Zen.post No. 62) - postage 35H, registration 25H, 94 value steps at 10H each, total 10Kkr.

Has anyone a more realistic idea of the purpose of such a high value? The modern UK equivalent would be a £180 stamp!

...and Answers

Ringed figures

The ringed figure ① on the postcard shown on page 20 of issue 131 is not Austrian - it's the number of the delivery round of the destination town. These were used in the larger towns in Bavaria, Belgium and Holland. (*Thanks, John*)

Tarnstempel

A TARNSTEMPEL is a "hidden" postal marking (cf the Tarnhelm in Wagner's Ring cycle). Usually a box with Roman numerals at top (denoting the province)

and normal number at the bottom (usually the number in alphabetical order of the open offices in the province - more or less. Used occasionally to disguise origin of mail posted in WWI, although often rendered pointless by manuscript annotations from the sender saying where posted! Often used before(?) and after the war (including SHS) on parcel cards etc. See Clement, Wurth, Tranmer etc.

1947 postage rates

An anomaly in the Michel listings has been identified and resolved. The tables at the back give the foreign registered and foreign express rates for the period 1.1.1947-31.8.1947 as 30 groschen and 20 groschen, the same as for the inland rates. This seemed odd, and examination of the official Post Office Announcements shows that it is also wrong: the rates were 100 groschen for foreign registered and 200 groschen for foreign express. The Announcement also clarifies some special rates: the express rate for packets in this period was 60gr local, 120gr inland, 280gr foreign; and for a Wertbrief or a Postanweisung 40gr local, 80gr inland, 200gr foreign.



Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

As a new member of the Society I just wanted to thank you for the quality of Austria [☺ Ed] and reiterate your plea for articles on basic philatelic issues. Although returning to collecting Austria after a gap of some five+ years, I consider myself very much a beginner and am constantly amazed at the depth of knowledge shown by your members. I particularly enjoyed the article on Kleinwalsertal in the Autumn journal. It was with some delight then that on picking through a recently purchased all-world mixture that I found a perfect copy of the MITTELBERG postmark. What are the chances of that? There were only a total of four Austrian stamps in the mixture !

Duncan MacLean

Dear Editor,

Austria 131 received today - super! You may be unaware of the existence of the Austrian Railway Study Group; its Secretary is Howard Lawrence, 14 Wheatfield Way, Skegby, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts NG17 3EU.

Tom Marsh

[and there is the German Railway Society: write to Tony Boyer, address as Joyce Boyer on inside front cover. Ed]

Dear Editor,

A comment or two on the first provisional Viennese Rekozettel from 1885. I have tried to collect these on cover for a good thirty years, and actually have ten of the post offices. There was a lecture by Bernd Vogel in Vienna about 3 years ago on Austrian Rekozettel, and in it he stated that a second-day cover, that is March 16, 1885, is known. He didn't show a picture of it, but he did show a cover from March 23.

One more thought. I believe that the reason the Verordnungsblatt from 21 September 1886 says "in an identical manner" is that in Vienna, the new style labels had already been issued earlier - I have a cover from June 14, 1886 from the Central Postamt to Cividale where the registry label is already the new style! The date inside the folded letter (June 8, from a tax office in Vienna) and the receiving date from Cividale (June 17) are all consistent with this. So I think the decree refers to the identical manner to those which they had already issued in Vienna a few months earlier. I am not sure any of the Viennese registry label collectors agree with this, but I have a cover to back me up!

Henry Pollak

Dear Editor,

I understand from a Deutsche Grammophon biography that in 1983 the province of Salzburg marked the 75th birthday of Herbert von Karajan by issuing a commemorative postage stamp. I realize that this is a "cinderella" item and nothing to do with the Austrian Post Office (we will probably have to wait until April 2008 for a stamp to commemorate von Karajan's birth centenary!). I would like to try and obtain a copy of this "postage stamp" but I have been unable to find out any other details. I wondered if any readers of "AUSTRIA" have come across this item and can point me in the right direction!

Linda Perkins

Dear Membership Secretary,

I have decided not to renew my subscription. My interest in Austria is limited to stamps up to 1945; most of the articles in the magazine are about postal history, modern issues, or the Officers' holidays in Austria. None of this interests me.

Ex-Member.

[Articles saying something new, or something old in a new way, about pre-1945 stamps always warmly welcomed. Ed]

Christkindl Covers - or are they?

By Andy Taylor

This first cover looks like a combination of a Tag der Briefmarke and a Registered-at-Christkindl cover. But, asks its owner, is it a Philatelic Artefact?



The left-hand Tag cancel is on top of the "über Christkindl" label, as is the registration label, which is also on top of the blue-biro address [so the cancel must have been added last]. On the rear is an arrival mark: WIEN / 5.12.66 / 1040, corresponding to the address. So how can this cover have both a WIEN 1150 Tag der Briefmarke cancel dated 2.12.1966 and a registration label applied at Christkindl along with a cancel for 3.12.1966?

The franking is 3S + 3S = 6S [Schilling]; at that date the rate for a 20gram inland letter was 1S50 (3S was the standard foreign rate, an interesting choice for the Tag der B. stamp!). The inland registration fee was an additional 2S50.

My best guess is that the originator prepared an unaddressed cover with an "über Christkindl" label, took it to the BÖBV event, purchased the Tag der Briefmarke stamp, stuck it on, got the special cancels, added the address and the Trollblume stamp, went to the Christkindl Post Office, handed it over the counter, and paid the registration fee in cash.

My second best guess is that he posted it to the Christkindl Post Office with a covering letter and the fee, and they registered it. Would it have arrived and been dealt with so quickly?

The second item may have a similar explanation.



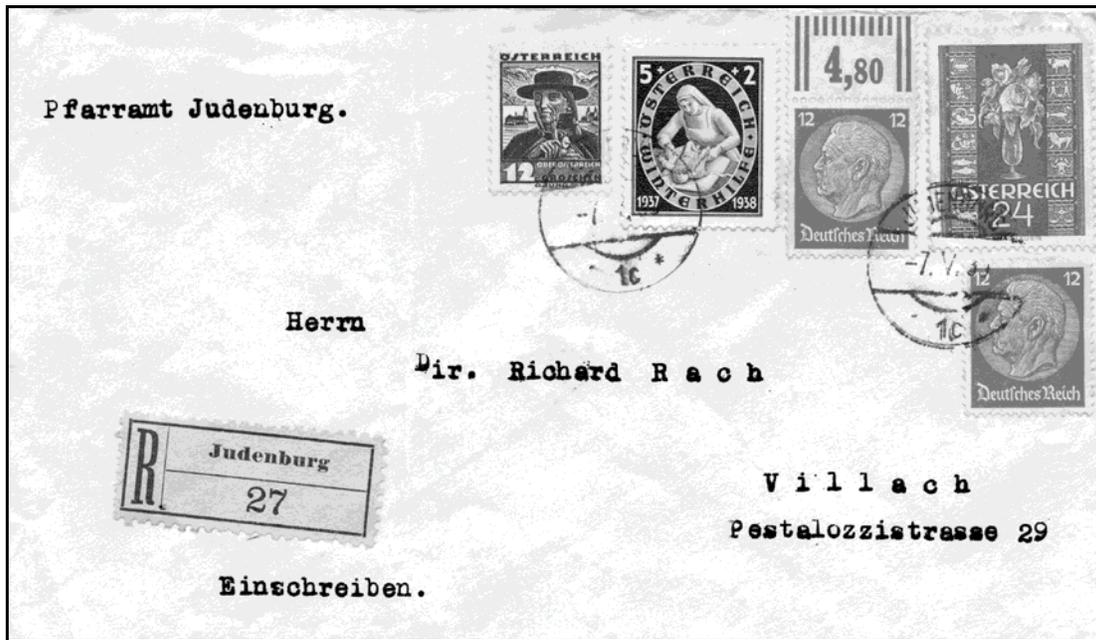
This deckle-edged card was obtained from an Australian Auction House, its owner having bid because the description intrigued her. Whilst there is a Christkindl Registration label on the card, the only stamp is for East Germany. As the card is going to Australia it can hardly be the 'other half' of a double letter card since this would have had an Australian stamp. (She knows of one of these having the Christkindl cancellation on a GB card.) The reverse shows a black and white Alpine Winter scene with the greeting 'Frohe Weihnachten und ein glückliches neues Jahr', and another ABERDARE NSW cancel. Can anyone explain why there is no Austrian stamp on the card?

125 Years of Registration Labels (concluded)

by Andy Taylor

But first: 1938 Mixed Frankings

Inevitably, these two examples of 1938 mixed franking reached me shortly after the last issue went for printing; the Judenburg (7.5.1938) has a medium yellow label, the Graz (25.9.1938) a lemon yellow.



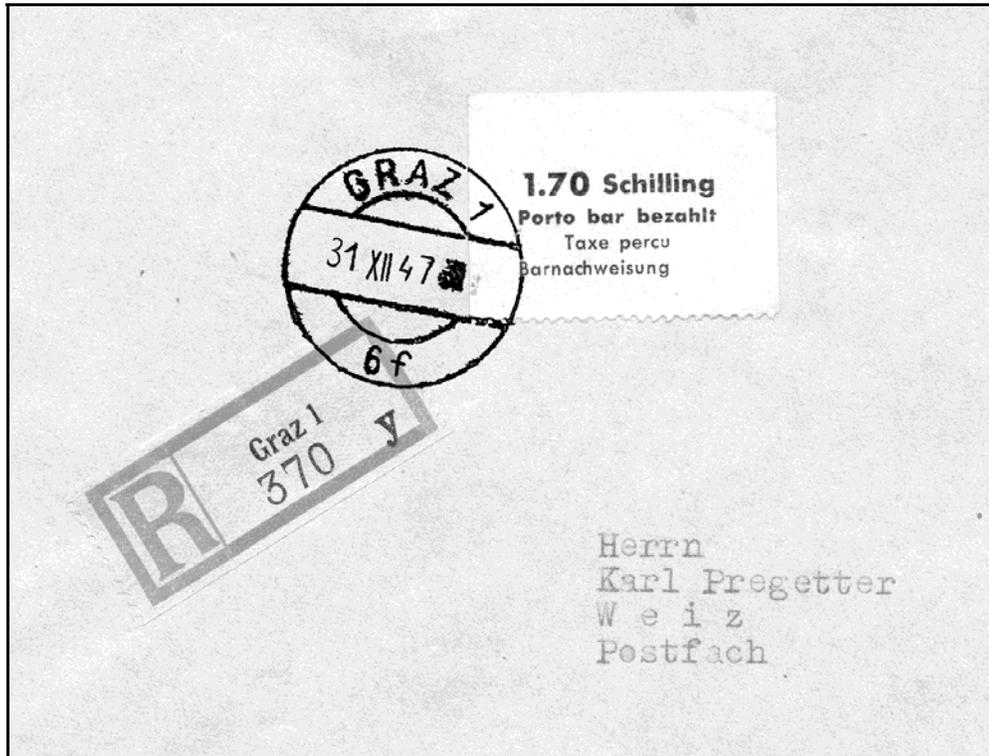
And more "emergency measures":

This cover with a handwritten registration label was posted on 14.8.1947 from Viktring via Klagenfurt by air mail to Rhode Island in the USA; another example of changes ordained in Vienna taking surprisingly long to be implemented elsewhere! The sender was Buettner, an active stamp dealer there.

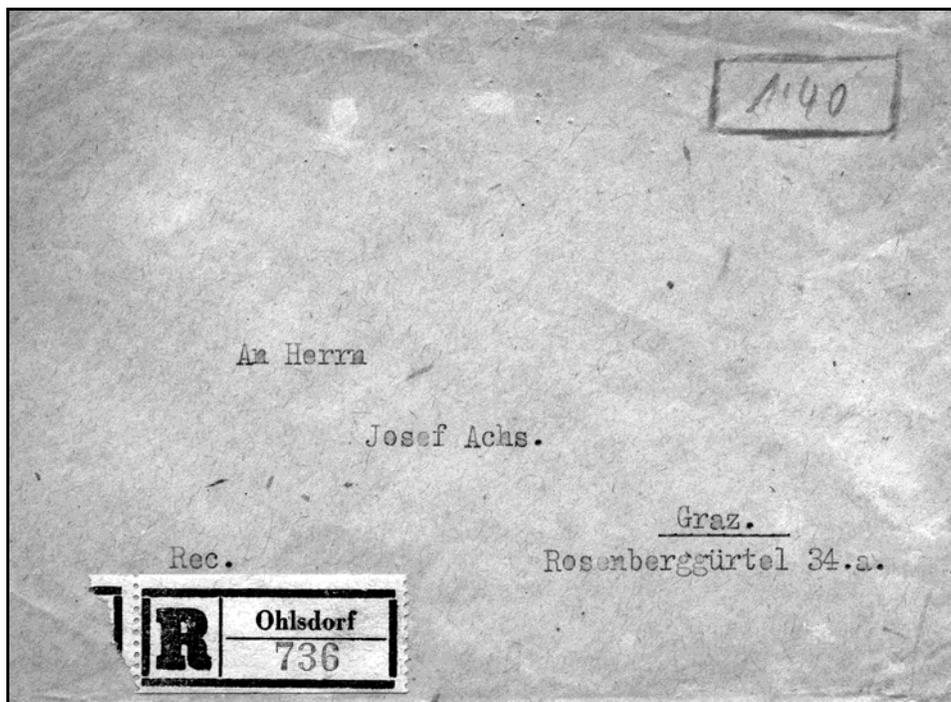


There is something odd about the back of this cover.. The front carries franking of 286 groschen. The registration fee was 100, the foreign surface rate per 20 grams was 60, and the airmail surcharge to the USA per 5 grams was 120. So a 5-gram letter would have been 280gr, and a 10-gram letter 400gr. A franking of 386gr makes no sense.

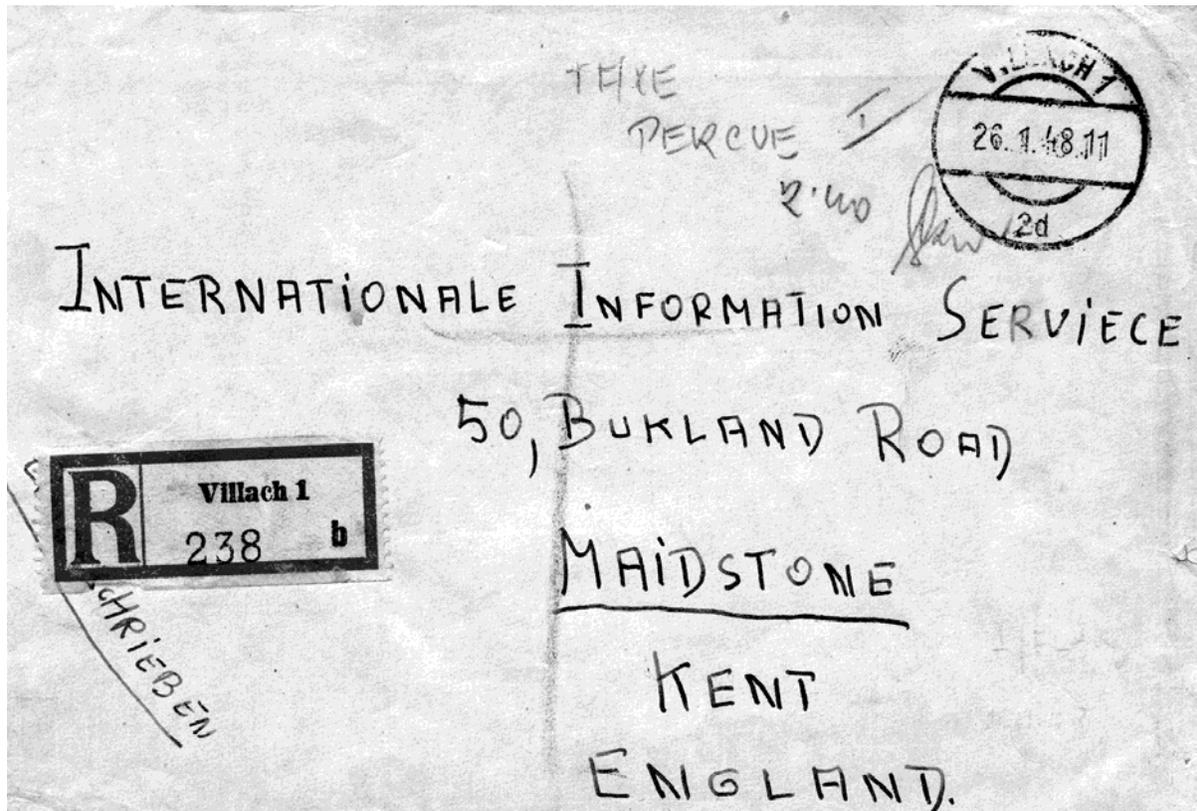
However, the 1Sch stamp on the back was only cancelled in transit at Klagenfurt, not on posting at Viktring, AND it's second-hand anyway: there is a small cancel in its bottom right corner. One wonders if the sender arranged that the office should conveniently run out of labels!



These "Porto bar bezahlt" labels were privately produced, but recognised by the Post Office. See Michel (1998 edn) pp92-3 or ASCGB Library item 272 "Spezialkatalog Notmaßnahmen in Österreich 1945-1948" pp77-77. Red German registration label.



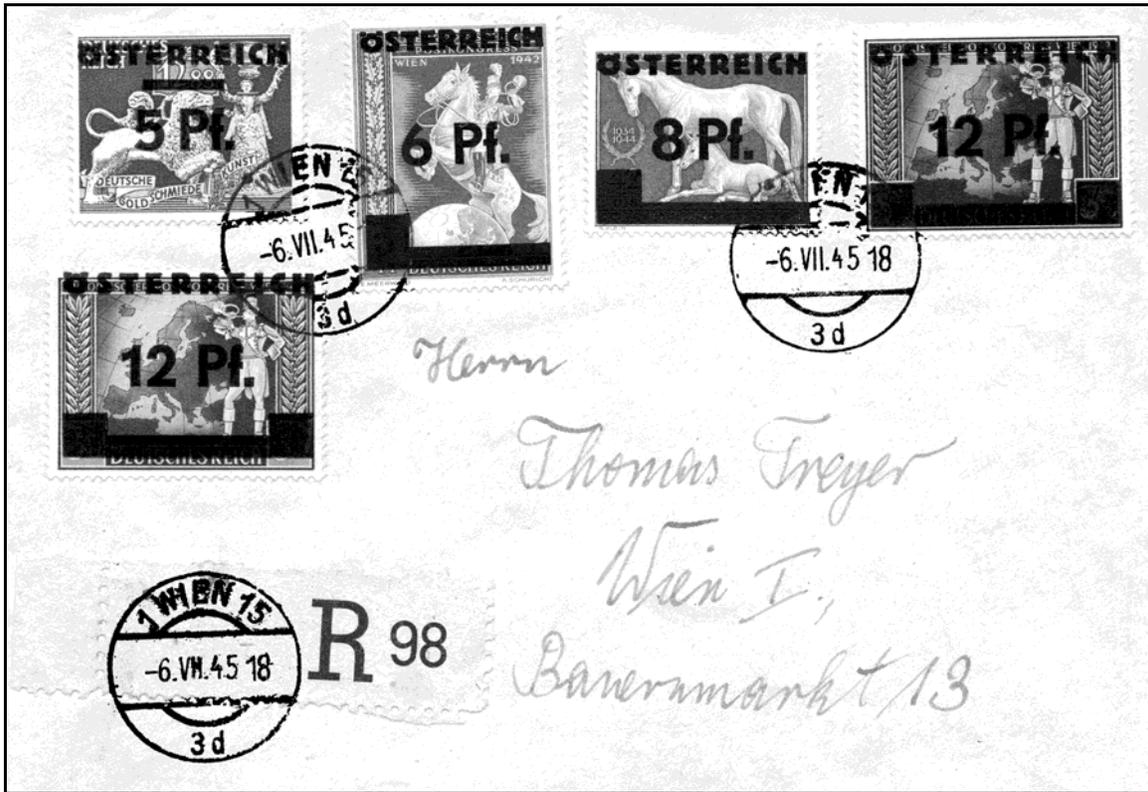
On this undated cover, 1.40 has been written in the top right corner and boxed in red to indicate that the postage was paid in cash. Yellow Austrian label.



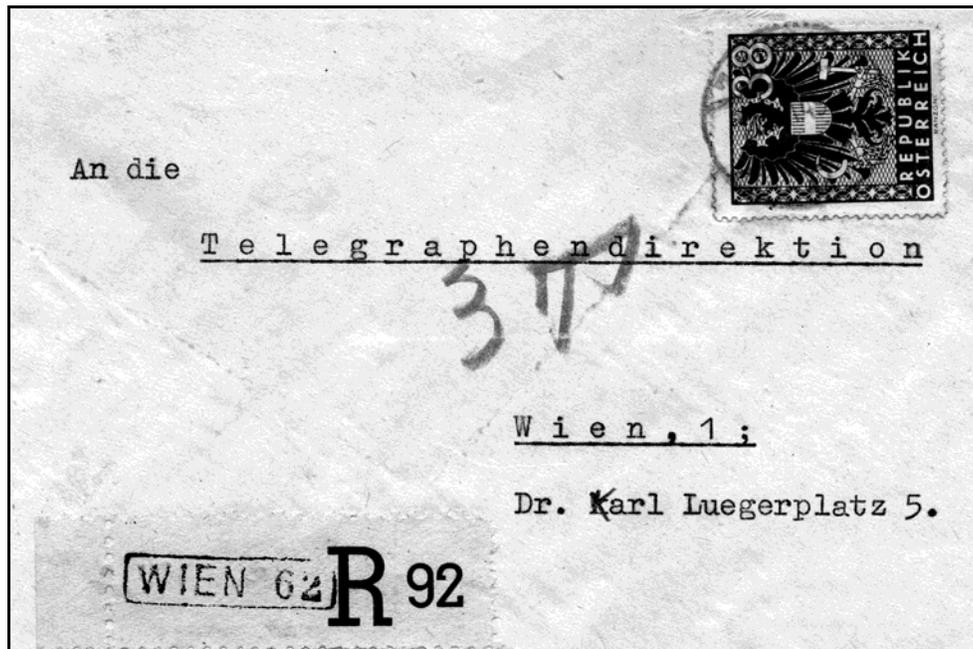
Here "Taxe Percue 2.40" and a signature indicates that the postage was paid in cash. Red German label.

The first Austrian provisional issue of 1945

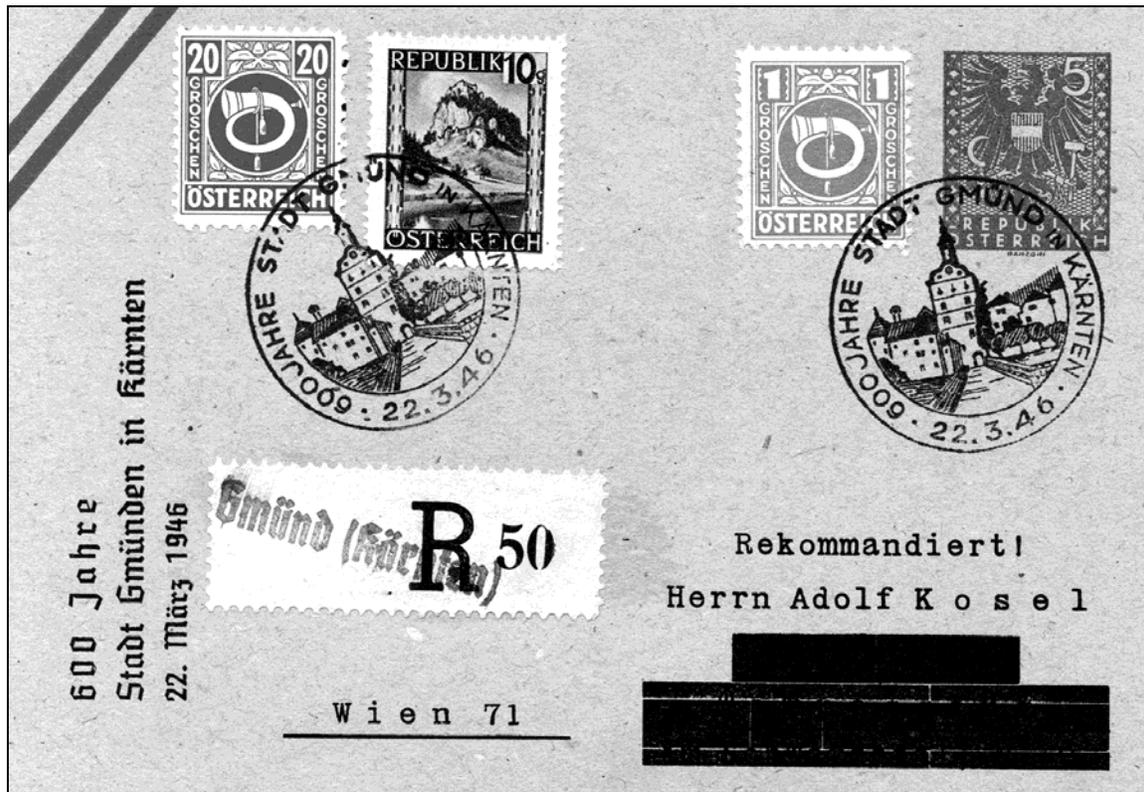
As stated in part 1, it was not immediately possible to deliver these, and the post offices had to cope as best they could. The design of the new Registration Labels reached back to one which had already been used in the monarchy and the First Republic for the Railway Post, and as a provisional design for Burgenland before the appearance of the final Registration Labels. It used rectangular slips of paper in the format 54x18 mm, with crude perforations or bad rouletting, which show only the R and a two- or three-digit item number. The left part is left empty for the addition of the post office. At the point of use the missing hundreds digit and counter letter were sometimes added. There are seven main types of these labels. See Reference 1 for fuller details.



This label is a pale yellow-buff (difficult to illustrate as it's much like the envelope), about 54x19mm, perforated all round (the top and bottom are particularly ragged!). It is pre-printed R98 and cancelled with the same canceller as the stamps, on 6.7.1945.



The next is similar, & dated 5.7.1945, but the name has been added by using a "WIEN 62" rectangular canceller with slightly rounded corners (on the original it is fainter). The name on the stamp's cancel is unreadable.



This is a thick grey postcard, sent from Gmünden to Vienna on 22 Mar 1946. Although the rightmost stamp (ANK716, face value 5 pfennig) was invalidated on 21.12.1945, it continued as an imprint on postcards at a value of 5 groschen.

The definitive issue of the 2nd Republic

The official records have disappeared, but it is clear that the new definitive issue appeared only very slowly from the end of 1945. The provisional issue was still sporadically used for many years. Of course the early editions could not be manufactured with today's level of care! The R and the paper quality were improved repeatedly, and the text brought into line with the actual post office designations. There are different types and subspecies distinguished: 2 paper types, 3 box- and R-types, 8 fonts, 2 figure types. As previously, Blankozettel were manufactured, ie Registration Labels with no place designation, in which the place-name could be inserted in writing or by means of a canceller.



Used in Vienna, 25.10.1945



Cancelled 24.11.1945. The 5pf/gr stamp is pre-printed; the 50gr and 60gr were issued on 24.11.1945 so it is indeed their First Day. Letter post was 36gr; registration fee 30gr; total 66 so it's rather overfranked! The Postage Due of 10gr was the Postlagernd fee, presumably cancelled when the item was (not surprisingly) returned as uncollected.



This letter has the improbable cancellation date of 39.10.1946! The ring-type canceller 5b must have been miss-set, as the receipt issued to the sender used canceller 7a (bridge-type) and is dated 30.10.1946. By the 9th of November 1946 both another letter and the receipt were being cancelled with the same canceller, 5b, correctly dated (letter not shown: almost identical to the previous example but the envelope is the same colour as the label!)



Vienna, 18.9.1946



Vienna, 26.9.1946 - special First Day cancel

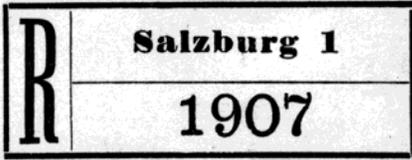
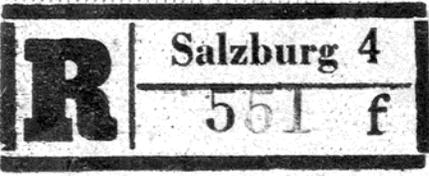
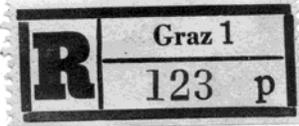


From Straßhof an der Nordbahn to Czechoslovakia, 25.8.1947



This cover, dated 8.10.1947, is from a Viennese philatelist to another in Switzerland. The enclosed letter makes interesting reading: "Unfortunately the crops are also very bad with us, and we again approach an unpleasant winter. Little coal, little light, little gas, food always still in insufficient amount, and government employees like me are unfortunately not in the financial situation to

be able to buy additional food on the black market." It's surprising the censor passed it; the letter itself has the same censor mark as the cover.

	<p>This is from 31.8.1948, to Klagenfurt. The original is lemon-yellow and has a pre-war look.</p>
	<p>This is on a FDC for the "100 years of Austrian stamps" stamp, dated 20.5.1950</p>
	<p>This label is on a 1951 cover from Salzburg to Muhlbach i. Pinzgau, franked with sixteen 10-groschen stamps to make up the rate of 160 groschen!</p>
	<p>This Sonderpostamt label appears (judging by the specimens I have seen) to have been used only on first-day covers in the 1960s.</p>
 <p>Mister Bosun's Locker 63/65 East Street C h i c h e s t e r Sussex Großbritannien</p> 	<p>This, from Graz on 21.11.1964, has an intriguing address...</p>

The postcoded issue

Post codes were introduced in Austria with effect from 1st January 1966. A new printing plate was created, with the vertical and horizontal lines left out, and a new R used, so that the whole appearance became essentially modern. During the transition the old forms could be used and the new code added by means of a canceller or in writing. Three paper types are known: dark yellow paper, striped paper, and light yellow paper (warning: it changes color very easily if soaked off). Very many Registration Labels occur on all three paper types. This first example is a FDC for both the stamp and the label!



As for the preceding issues, counter letters occur, sometimes also double letters or combinations of lower and upper-case letters. Relatively often one finds these letters added subsequently, sometimes with cancellers, sometimes in writing. As for earlier issues Blankozetteln were prepared, to be used when no printed Registration Labels were available. Occasionally Registration Labels of other post offices were used, or earlier issues were temporarily used.

A variety of examples follow.

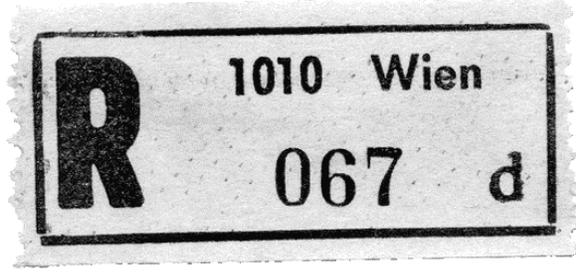
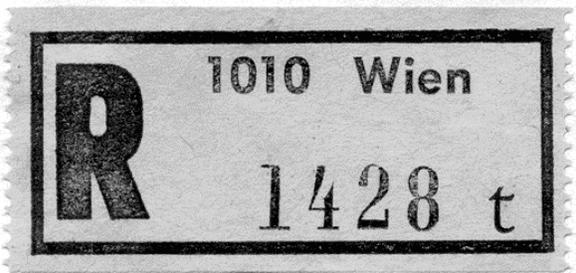


An Official Post Office Letter to Lübeck, dated 13.12.1968.



This is a Blankozettel, with "3660 Kleinpöchlarn" added in a faint violet stamp.

For Wien 1010 I have these examples from the late 1980s of Registration Labels with different "counter letters". I note that in no case does the "counter letter" on the label match that on the cancel (for labels e, f, g & t the cancels are 2bo, 2bs, 2bq & 2as). On 27th May 2000, canceller 2as was in use at the first counter on the left: large though Wien 1010 may be it does not have 50 counters! These letters must be simply a serial letter for the roll of labels.



←Here is a different style of "counter letter d" from 1975

**ORGANISATIONSKOMITEE
WIPA 1981
A-1060 WIEN, GETREIDEMARKT 1**



This "registration label" from WIPA1981 is actually printed on the envelope! Presumably the "254" was added separately. The **R** is different from those on 'normal' labels: it has a chamfered top right corner instead of a rounded one.

And a couple from Kleinwalsertal..

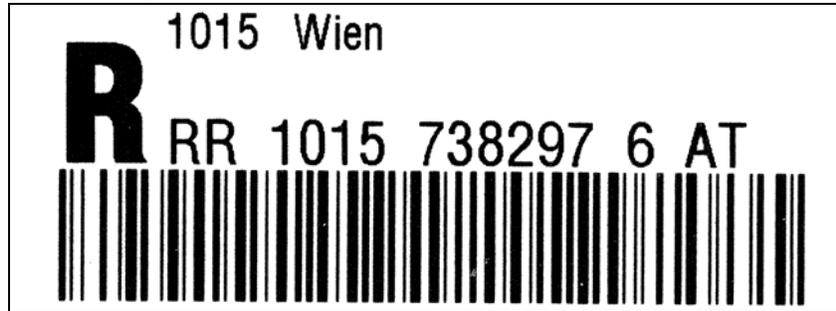


Commercially used on 26.2.1986: rate 5 postage + 17 registered = 22 schillings.



Philatelic letter of 19.9.1986 - rate still 22, paid by 5.60 + 0.40 + 16.

Bar coded Registration Labels



Around the beginning of 1996, a new type of Registration Label was introduced, printed on self-adhesive white paper instead of on gummed yellow paper. The size was 74x26 mm, noticeably larger than the previous issue; the corners are well-rounded. The most striking feature is the 51x11 mm bar-code, which was a new feature for Austria although already in use in for example Switzerland.

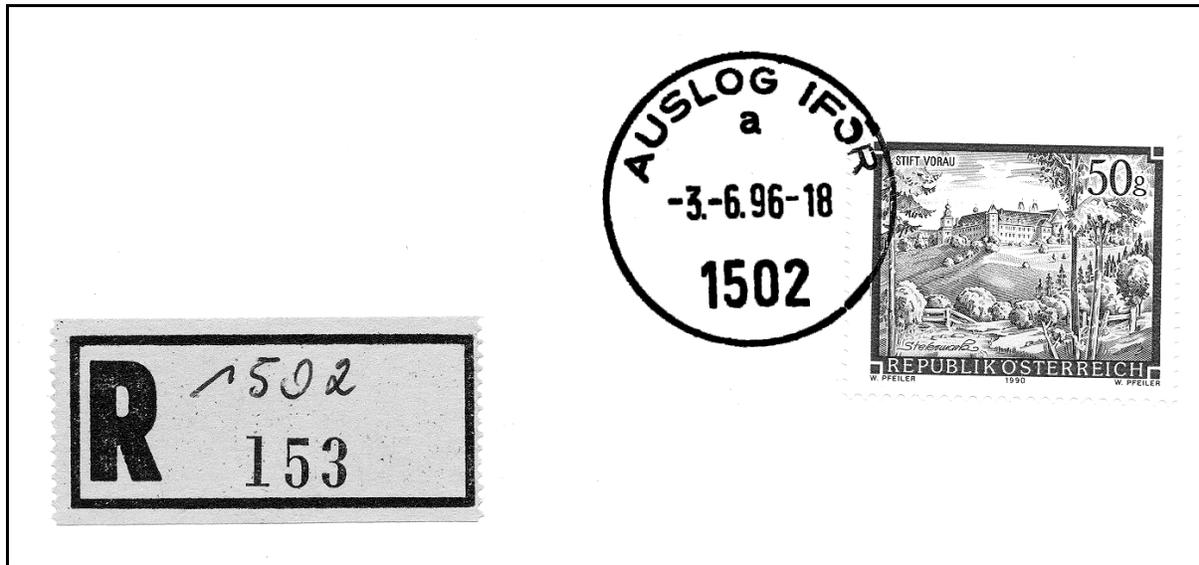
On the left above the bar-code is a large letter "R". Beside that is a line of numbers and letters, beginning with the letters "RR" indicating a registered letter (if RA it's a provisional label), followed by the four-figure post code (in the example 1015), a six-figure serial number (in the example 738297), a check digit, and distinction letters. At the top of the label is the office designation and post code in a somewhat smaller font (in the example 1015 Wien).

These new adhesive labels were introduced as soon as the stocks of yellow labels were exhausted, so in theory yellow Registration Labels will by now have disappeared at all post offices. In practice it could be different... For the collector, the new Registration Label needs a sharp knife, as you cannot soak off adhesive slips of paper!

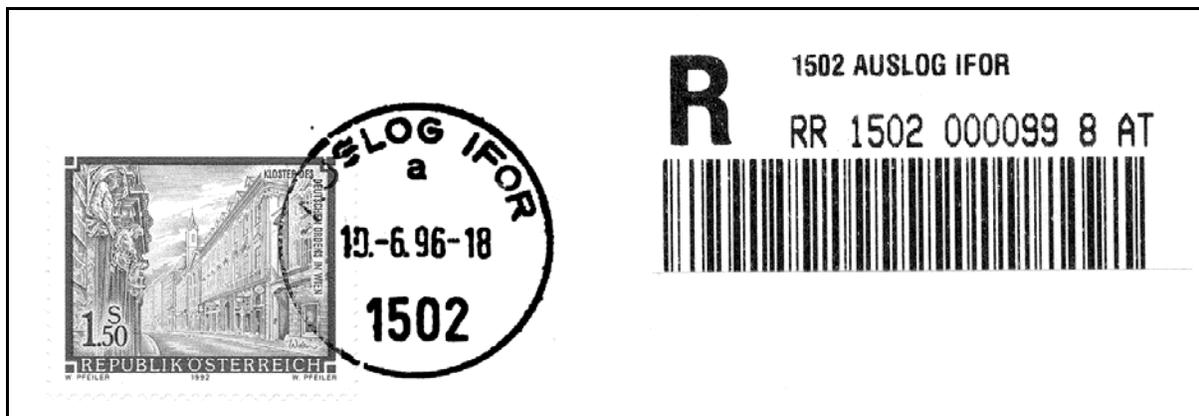


One unusual feature of the system is that it is possible to register a second-class, sorry a non-priority, item of mail. These are most commonly found on post-cards connected with the renewal of insurance policies. The example above carries 31.5 Schillings postage, not the usual 32.

An interesting example of the use of a "Blankozettel", ie a registration label with the office name omitted, arose when the Austrian contingent to the IFOR operation was set up. Initially the postcode, 1502, had to be written by hand on a yellow label; the first example is dated 3.6.1996.



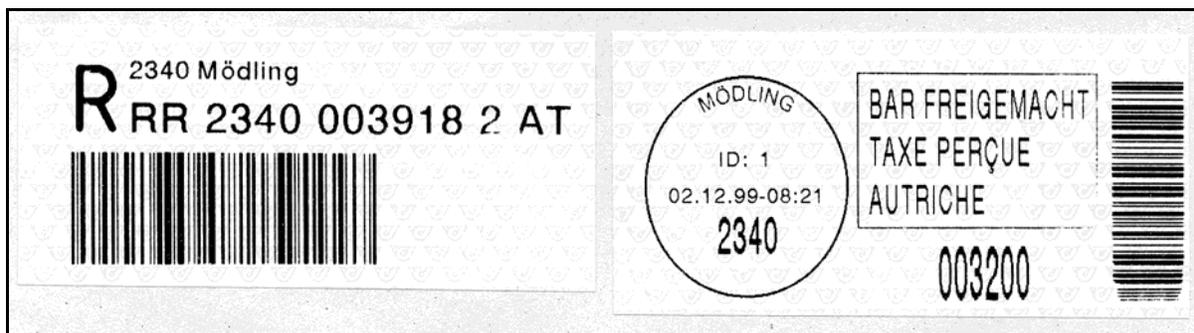
When the system caught up, barcoded labels were used; the second example is dated 10.6.1996.



The next example was cancelled on the first day of the use of a barcoded label at Riezlern, on 1 Aug 1996.



The most recent innovation is the RIPOSTE system by Opal, which prints a registration label on special adhesive paper with a background of yellow posthorns. The same system is used to print "postage paid" labels. Yes, the "cde" is indeed oval (23mm wide by 25mm high) - it's not your eyes or my scanner!



Literature:

1. "*Kleine Typenkunde der österreichischen Registration Labels*", Prof. Richard Zimmerl: reprinted from die Briefmarke 1982 & 1996. ASCGB Library item 223.
2. "*Einschreib-Post*", Pettenbach-Wels, various issues 1949-1954
3. "*Mitteilungsblatt des Ersten Österreichischen Registration Labels-Sammler-Vereins Wien*", various issues 1955-1974
4. Erhard Görig, "*Postämterverzeichnis der Republik Österreich*", Wien 1962 [unpublished but we have a copy of most of it]
5. Prof. Richard Zimmerl, "*Historisches Postämterverzeichnis Österreichs*", Wien 1975
6. Otto Krause, "*Katalog der Registration Labels Österreichs von 1885-1938*", Wien 1974
7. VÖPh Festschrift "*125 Jahre österreichische Briefmarke*": "*90 Jahre Registration Labels in Österreich*", Prof Richard Zimmerl. ASCGB Library item 100.
8. [100 years of] Registration Labels, Austria No 72 (1985) p36.
9. "*Auslandseinschreibbriefe: 'Rekommandirt' in der 2. Republik Österreich 1945-2000*" - Dr Helmut Seebald, WIPA2000 Festschrift pp180-189
10. "*Die österreichischen Briefpostgebühren 1945/46*", Dr C Kainz, Österreichische Postgeschichte vol VII (1985): ASCGB Library item 232/7.
11. Steinkogler, W.: "*Katalog der Rekozettel-Provisorien Österreichs 1945-1965 (Catalogue of the Provisional Registration Labels of Austria 1945-1965)*.".
12. Fritsch, D.I.: "*Katalog der Rekozettel Österreichs ab 1945*" (Catalogue of the Registration Labels of Austria from 1945).
13. Mayrl, W.: "*Katalog der Rekozettel Österreichs von 1938 bis 1945*" (Catalogue of the Registration Labels of Austria from 1938 to 1945).
14. See the ASCGB library list for further reading on the subject!



Lies, damned lies, and statistics

Or, do we really need a library?

By Andy Taylor

"A library is thought in cold storage" - Lord Samuel.

"No place affords a more striking conviction of the vanity of human hopes than a public library" - Samuel Johnson.

*"Books in poor condition or older than 10 years are thrown away"-
Book Aid International.*

Historically, any philatelic book or pamphlet with a subject with an even tenuous relation to Austrian Philately has been purchased for the ASCGB library. Recent circumstances have led to a study of the usage made of this valuable resource. The results confirm some of the more pessimistic opinions, and your committee will be discussing what (if any) changes should be made to the traditional policies. **Your comments are needed** - the committee are perhaps more likely to have their own copies of the works particularly relevant to their specialist areas, and it's the other members who may be the heavier users. Also it's your library, not the committee's !

One problem is that you may not know what is IN the library. There are 334 items, nominally, although some of these are for example complete runs of a journal. We have reciprocal arrangements with many other societies for the exchange of journals. There must be thousands of separate volumes! The books occupy about 70 feet of shelves, and there are many large boxes of magazines. It's an impressive sight! The last full printed index covers items 1 to 285 - that's the small yellow-covered booklet; if you do not have one, write to the Treasurer. A complete list is on my web site [address on inside back cover], but that is I fear inaccessible to probably the majority of members. There is a printed Supplementary List, though only of the titles, and a copy of this appears elsewhere in this issue. So one question to be addressed is how best to inform members of what is in stock.

Then there's the matter of language - there are works in English (UK and USA dialects), German, Italian, Czech, Rumanian, Hungarian, French, and Serbo-Croat; with quotations in other languages such as Latin and Yiddish. Then there is that interesting mode of writing which I call "Postal Austrian". The Society's ability to render extensive assistance in these areas is highly limited!

Another challenge is that someone taking up a new area needs guidance on which works are best. There is a bibliography written by J F Giblyn (see

'AUSTRIA' No 74 with a supplement in No 80 [a combined version is on the web site] and his articles in Nos 24, 89 & 120), but there is considerable scope for the experts in each area to write overviews of the latest books and other information. As happened to Martin Brumby with Dalmatia, & myself with the considerably less important topic of "10 Schilling Stamp Machines", you may find that if you want an in-depth study of an unusual or unpopular area then you have to write it yourself, and perhaps learn the language of the original sources.

In practice, we aim to help members and their diverse interests through updates of the library list (eg as in this issue), many of the new volumes being reviewed at some stage in these pages. Doubtless, the key to information is our Subject Index, which is now in process of being updated.

What is the pattern of borrowing from the Library? Arthur Godden, the Librarian, has provided me with the relevant data from 1967 to mid-2000, and my summary of the more important features follows. Books, of course, cannot be borrowed until a copy is in the Librarian's hands and you are told it is there. Then, once all those who want to read it have done so, they tend to decline in popularity, unless a recommendation in some article excites new interest. A few, however, remain in steady demand.

The most striking figure is that, according to Arthur's records, **152 of the 328 items, that's 46%, have NEVER been borrowed.** A further 76 items, 23%, have been borrowed once only. At the other end of the spectrum, "Austrian Post Offices Abroad" has been borrowed 83 times (although only 3 times in the last 5 years) and "Postal Obliterations and Other Cancellations on Austrian Stamps 1867, 1883 and 1890" (alias Klein) 50 times. A histogram of borrowing-frequency would resemble the ski jump at Innsbruck - and some of you know where that leads to!

The "Top 19 items" from 1967 to date

Item	Title	Author	Borrowed
3	Austrian Post Offices Abroad (in 8 parts)	Tchilinghirian, Stephen & Tranmer	83 times
31	Postal Obliterations and Other Cancellations on Austrian Stamps 1867, 1883 and 1890	Klein	50 times
8	Handbook of Austria and Lombardy-Venetia Cancellations on the Postage Stamp Issues 1850, 1858/9, 1860/1, 1863, 1863/4	Müller & Fitch	37 times
5	Post Offices of Former Austrian Territories	ASCGB	31 times

Item	Title	Author	Borrowed
7	Handbook of the Pre-Stamp Markings of Austria	Müller	22 times
11	Handbuch der Feld- und Militärpost in Osterreich	Clement	19 times
50	Austro-Hungarian A.P.O.s: 1914-1918	Tranmer	16 times
21	Specialised Catalog of Austria 1850 to 1918	Müller	16 times
56	Ganzsachen Österreich: Spezialkatalog und Handbuch	Schneiderbauer	14 times
41	Spezialkatalog und Handbuch: Österreich 1850-1918	Ferchenbauer (various editions)	14 times
1	Grosser Ganzsachen-Katalog:	Ascher	13 times
45	Postal Markings of the Austro-Hungarian Navy 1914-1918	Tranmer	13 times
18	Feld- u. Etappenpoststempel von Österreich-Ungarn	Majetic	13 times
20	Sonderpostämter in Österreich	Wurth	11 times
47	A Post-Habsburg Index	Davies	9 times
29	Occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Turks 1846-79	Waste	9 times
231	Collected Magazine articles	(Various)	8 times
42	The Postal History of Austria 1938-1946	Tranmer	8 times
6	Bulletin of the Austria Philatelic Society of New York	APSNY	8 times (once, all of it!)

And in the bargain basement..

Seven items were borrowed 7 times, two 6 times, four 5 times, nineteen 4 times, twenty-two 3 times, twenty-seven 2 times, seventy-six once, and one hundred and fifty two never. (It sounds like Leporello's Catalogue Aria!)

Other outcomes of the analysis: the total number of borrowings since 1968 is 747, which is an average of one each week. The monthly rate for various periods varies oddly.. perhaps it's related to the number of new members?

1967-91	1991-4	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Avg
5.82	3.95	3.00	1.67	4.17	1.50	1.75	2.43	4.13

Conclusion

As already stated, your comments on the future conduct of the Library would be much appreciated - please write to the Librarian (address on inside front cover).

5 & 6 Rpf postcards

By Andy Taylor

In 1945, preprinted postcards were issued with the 5Rpf green & 6Rpf light violet Russian Zone stamps (ANK716 & 717) imprinted on them. Although the stamps were invalidated on 20 Dec 1945, and the currency had reverted to Schillings on 24 Nov 1945, the cards continued in use for some time.

Schneiderbauer (p109) states that the first post-WWII stamps for the whole of Austria were those of the landscape series (ANK738-766), the first of which were issued on 24 Nov 1945. The corresponding postcards could not be delivered at the same time by the Staatsdruckerei because of the shortages of material in the postwar era (indeed, they first appeared in 1948), and therefore the postcards of the coat-of-arms series evidently kept their validity probably to 30 Aug 1947, perhaps even to 10 Dec 1947.

The examples I have seen are all from 1945-46; some correspond with the published rates assuming these cards had an effective value of 5 or 6 groschen, while others have no sensible explanation! The first two examples have a distinctly philatelic appearance.



The first card has the 5Rpf imprint cancelled with a special postmark in Linz (anniversary of liberation of Mauthausen) on 5 May 1946, then First Day cancels on two of the Antifascist Exhibition issue on 16 Sep 1946. However the

second franking was 212 groschen while the postage in September 46 to USA was 30gr and the registration fee 100gr. There is a faint censor mark on the front and nothing whatsoever apart from a New York arrival cancel on the back - and that is dated 16 Jan 1947! A slow boat?



The second example has the special cancel for the opening on 12 Jan 1946 of the USA Exhibition. The 5Rpf is supplemented by another 22 groschen. For an inland postcard at that date the postage was 5 groschen (local rate) and the registration fee 30gr; as printed matter it would have needed 3gr + 30gr.

I have also seen a similar card with the Oberösterreich arms and the 5Rpf imprint only and the same cancel; and another with the 5Rpf imprint only but with the same cancel on a 3gr Landscape stamp on the back! Similarly, the large Export Exhibition special cancel is common on 5Rpf and 6Rpf cards, often with no address. I conclude that these cards were often used to collect a cancellation, the inherent value paying for the service of applying the canceller - or maybe the cards were used simply because they were available and nothing else was: after all, it took the Staatsdruckerei until 1948 to produce Second Republic cards. It is also noticeable that a large proportion of such cards were posted by and/or to the firm of Adolf Kosel.

However the two cards shown below were used for normal correspondence; the left hand one from Wien 89 to Wien 4 on 13 Mar 1946, the right hand one from Wien 27 to Wien 11 on 6 Nov 1946. The postage for a local postcard was 5

groschen until 31 Dec 1946. The left one has a very "life is back to normal" message...



12. 3. 46

Sehr geehrte gnädige Frau!

Ihre Wäsche wird geliefert am
Mittwoch den 20. März.

Hochachtungsvoll

This "FDC" was cancelled on 24 Nov 1945. The 5pf/gr stamp is pre-printed; the 50gr and 60gr were issued on 24 Nov 1945 so it is indeed their First Day. Letter post was 36gr; registration fee 30gr; total 66 so it's rather overfranked! The Postage Due of 10gr was the Postlagernd fee, presumably cancelled when the item was (not surprisingly) returned as uncollected



Finally, this splendid specimen commemorates the first Wien-Paris flight of 29.3.1949; at last the 5Rpf imprint has been stamped "invalid"!



OBITUARY: BILL DENNIS 1924-2000

Keith Tranmer

All Saints Church, New Haw, Surrey was filled to capacity on the 17th July as the large congregation paid their last respects to Lieutenant Commander William Walter Dennis, M.B.E., R.N. who died on the 5th July 2000. The congregation awaited the arrival of the coffin to the strains of the organ playing favourite music which included the Blue Danube of Strauss. The coffin was draped with the White Ensign, and bore the family wreath, his sword and decorations on a black cushion which gave a brave splash of colour in the sunlight which streamed through the windows on a beautiful summer day.

Bill, as he was fondly known, ensured that his collecting was associated with things maritime, and while some believe this to be confined to Austria-Hungary, Navy and Lloyd, it also included Hungarian companies, the German Navy 1914-18, and as he called it the "Real Navy" which is the Royal Navy. We were planning a presentation about the Royal Navy in the Gulf of Finland in 1919 for Estonian television when news came that what appeared to be a stroke was in fact cancer.

Bill enlisted as an apprentice engineer, with a four year course in 1940; his first ship in 1944 was the cruiser Royalist in the Atlantic and northern waters until the ship was sent to the Mediterranean to support the Allied landing in the south of France. Later he was posted to the Far East. He was commissioned Lieutenant "E" in 1951 and served at sea in a variety of ships from Aircraft Carriers to Frigates and took part in the Korean War. For two years he held a senior post in the Hong Kong dockyard where he was joined by his family, and for the remainder of his service he was in much demand in various establishments in the U.K.

His collecting interests were well known in both the ASCGB and the Forces Postal History Society, and the latter were fortunate to have Bill as their Treasurer and Vice-President. Shortly before he died I telephoned him to thank him for all that he had done for us in the F.P.H.S. Our sympathy goes out to Bill's wife Christine and the children John, Mandy and Gillian.

OBITUARY: WALTER GEORGE SEXTON 1923-2000

J F Giblin

It is with great regret that we announce the death of W G Sexton on 3rd September 2000 at Crewe. Walter George Sexton was born on 10th March 1923 at Mapperley in Derbyshire; the son of George William Sexton, a colliery engineer, and of the latter's wife Florence Thwaites. He attended a primary school at Ilkeston from 1928-1933 and then went to Ilkeston Grammar School from 1933 to 1939. For a few months he worked in an architect's office, but on the outbreak of war entered the firm of Rolls Royce Ltd in Crewe as an apprentice. They allowed him to study and thus enabled him to take an external B.Sc.(Eng) degree in 1945. He then worked as a development engineer at Rolls Royce Ltd for the next three decades until 30th November 1982 when he accepted voluntary redundancy. In 1950 he had married Barbara Needham and they had two children, Jane (born 4.3.1953) and Simon (born 13.2.1956).

While Walter Sexton was at home ill in 1932, he started to look at his father's stamp collection. The family doctor, Dr Gilbertson, who had a brother and sister working in a Canton hospital, gave him large quantities of Chinese stamps which formed the basis of his collection. He became interested in Austrian stamps in 1953 when he joined the Crewe Philatelic Society, whose secretary was an Austrian specialist. Walter Sexton became secretary of that society in 1962 and held the position continuously thereafter, except when he served as its chairman. He joined the ASC at the end of 1966 as Member 418 (Austria 5 p21) and became a constant & regular attender at the Manchester meetings.

Not only did he occasionally display parts of his extensive Austrian collection at these meetings, but also, when it became impossible to hold meetings in Manchester during December because of Christmas bookings, he started to host them in Crewe itself. Barbara and Walter, for many years, acted as hosts at these meetings which were also open to members of the Crewe P.S. They always ended with coffee and mince pies kindly provided by Barbara. As an indication of the ASC's appreciation, Barbara was presented with the Society's Scarf at the meeting on 5th December 1992.

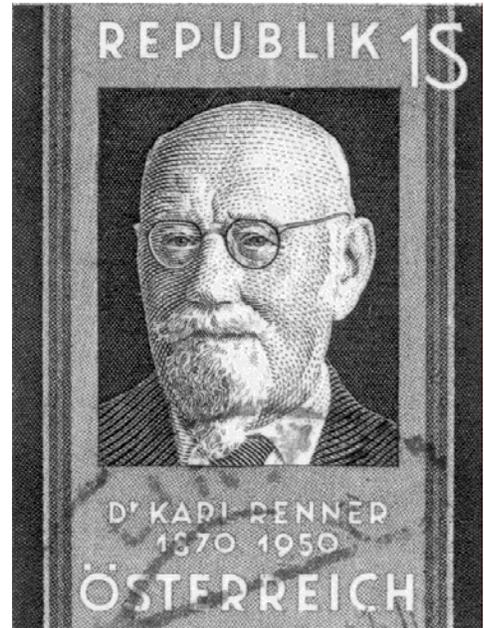
Then, in consideration for all the practical help afforded over many years to the ASC, Walter Sexton was elected an Honorary Life Member (no. 16) at the 45th AGM held in Manchester on 8th May 1993. However, he modestly declined this honour, claiming that he had done too little for the Society to deserve it. He then resigned from the ASC as he felt he could no longer attend any meetings!

This decision was probably influenced by the early death of his wife and his growing involvement with his grandchildren, but he remained active in the Crewe P.S. to whom he was due to present a paper a short time after he had died. The writer always enjoyed Walter's company and is sorry to record his death at the early age of 77 years.

Dr Karl Renner - 50th anniversary of his death

By A Taylor

Karl Renner was born on 14th December 1870 in Unter-Tannowitz (or Dolni-Dunajovice), a Moravian market spot north of Nikolsburg (or Mikulov), the nearest large town some 8km distant. He was the tenth son of Matthäus and Marie Habinger Renner, who were farmers. The family had to struggle for its very existence, so he had a hard but not joyless youth. His cleverness and eagerness to learn were noticed by his teachers in the village school, and they urged his father to let this very talented youngster continue his studies. Matthäus ventured the attempt despite the ever more hard-pressed material circumstances into which the family came, due to poor harvests and the unfavourable economic development of agriculture in the 1870s (*remember the panic of 1873 - translator's note*).



Since the hope for free tuition in the Piarist gymnasium in Nikolsburg fell through, the whole plan was in danger of failure after just a few weeks. But the tough will to self-assertion of the 11-year old won out! Since the paternal home could provide only a roof over his head and a scant measure of daily bread, the small boy walked day after day, summer and winter, morning and evening, in all kinds of weather for two hours from his native village to school in Nikolsdorf, and back. This was an almost superhuman demand on an undernourished child, but perhaps the precondition for the robust health which Karl Renner enjoyed into his "ripe old age".

He obtained a position in the Library of the Imperial Council and after studying law at the University of Vienna he obtained the degree of Doktor juris in the spring of 1896. Whilst still a student he married his wife Luise, and the pair remained devoted to each other till his death. Influenced mainly by his parents he became a member of the Social Democratic Party, then led by Viktor Adler.

Opposed to the Habsburg monarchy, Dr. Renner was prominent as a party leader and was elected as deputy to the National Assembly in 1908. He thought deeply about the social and political problems of his times. His publications were nationalistic, in line with the trend of the period. His "Fight of the Austrian Tribes and the State", "Principles of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy" and "Marxism" were followed by "The Self-Determination of Nations".



In 1918, Austria-Hungary collapsed and on Nov 12th Dr. Renner formed the first, temporary Cabinet of the Austrian Republic. In the first republican elections in February 1919, Dr. Renner's party emerged as the largest representation in the National Constitutional Assembly and he became the first State Chancellor of the young republic.

After the signing of the Treaty of St. Germain in 1919, which reduced Austria to a small, powerless state, a new coalition government was formed in which Dr. Renner added to the Chancellorship the portfolio of Foreign affairs. When that

coalition was dissolved, he continued as Foreign Minister until he resigned in October 1919. Elected to the National Assembly in 1920, he remained a member until 1934 and acted as its President from 1931 to 1933.

He was one of the Socialist leaders imprisoned in 1934 when the Dollfuss regime, supported by Austrian Fascists, crushed the revolt of the Socialist workers by force and outlawed the Socialist party. Because of lack of sufficient evidence against him, Dr. Renner was released a few months later and during the following years remained politically inactive. That was the decisive period when Austria under Chancellor Kurt von Schuschnigg drifted more and more into the Nazi camp and as a German appendage could no longer be regarded as an independent nation.



Dr. Renner supported Austria's union with Germany in pre-Hitler days, declaring that "Austria has no future". With the rise of nazism, however, the question of Anschluss took on different aspects, and when Hitler's forces marched into Austria on March 13, 1938, all freedom-loving Austrians, including Dr. Renner, realised that they had fought a losing battle. When Anschluss was completed and Austrian democratic forces went underground, Dr. Renner left his home in Vienna and went to live at Gloggnitz in Lower Austria.

Seven years later, on April 3rd 1945, he established contact with the Russian occupation forces that had marched into Austria, and on 20 April he was asked by the Russians to form the first Austrian Provisional Government and become

its Chancellor. The new Government took office on 27 April; it was a coalition consisting of 10 Social Democrats, 7 Communists, 9 conservatives and 3 non-party representatives. The Declaration of Austrian Independence was issued, stating in part "The Democratic Republic of Austria is re-established and shall be conducted in the spirit of the constitution of 1920" - not, note, a reversion to the immediately pre-Anschluss situation - and "The Anschluss ... is null and void". Dr. Renner and his wife were provided by the Government with a house in the American zone of Vienna. Following a broadening to include all the provinces, Renner's Government was eventually (20 October 1945) recognized by the Allied occupation powers, and soon afterwards it issued the first call for elections in Austria in eleven years.



General elections were held on 25 November 1945, and on 20 December Dr. Renner was elected Federal President for a term of six years, thus giving him the rare distinction of being chosen twice for virtually the same office, both after a world war. He received the unanimous vote of the two houses of Parliament, representing all three parties, including the Communists. Later he moved into the famous Hofburg palace on the Ring, the first non-royal head of the Austrian state to govern from the previous residence of the Habsburgs.



As president, Dr. Renner pleaded for the return to Austria of South Tyrol, condemned the zoning of Austria by the occupation powers, and asked for a reduction in the numbers of the occupation forces. He stressed political unity and disclaimed Pan-German aims, saying he had always been an internationalist.

Dr. Renner repeatedly made it plain he favored the United Nations rather

than the Communist brand of Internationalism, and consequently, when the Communist International was reorganized as the Communist Information Bureau at Warsaw in 1947, he was denounced as a "traitor to the working class". A few weeks later Dr. Renner called for an immediate peace treaty with Austria to "free her from imposed international entanglements" and to restore her sovereignty.

In 1948 Dr. Renner told the annual conference of Austrian trade unions that a one-party state cannot bring about social progress. He urged the delegates to adhere to democratic methods to obtain a "truly social state". He held up as a model the United States and Great Britain, which he said had drawn ahead of the rest of the world by change without revolution.

In a 1949 radio appeal for admission of Austria to the United Nations, Dr. Renner said there was "no serious political group in Austria which covets anything but true, full and peaceful democracy". Soon afterward in 1949 the Austrian right-wing parties decisively defeated the Communists in the second postwar elections.

Dr. Karl Renner died on Saturday Dec 30th 1950. His body lay in state for two days in the Hofburg; he was buried in Vienna on Thursday January 4th 1951.

Further Reading:

1. "The Last Habsburg" by Gordon Brook-Shepherd contains an interesting account of Renner's unsuccessful attempt to force Karl to abdicate before leaving Austria in March 1919.
2. "Austria" by K R Stadler.
3. "Austria is Free" - the signing of the State Treaty in 1955. 'Austria' 127 pp6-10.

Material sourced mainly from J F Giblin's POAS, S Rizza, H O Pollak, Öpost blackprints, and the Bulletin of the APS (of NY) for Jan 1951



New Members

A warm welcome to:

1147 D C MacLean, Surrey

1150 G G Cappellari, Trieste

1148 D Cameron, Nottingham

1151 M Resch, USA

1149 N Russell, Northampton

1152 D Grew, Romania

But goodbye to:

A W Bowles, C A Roberts, and G Swale

The River Danube

by A H Godden

A philatelic journey from the mouth of the River Danube to its source 2840 km (1,870 miles) away in the Black Forest shows that at one time all the countries traversed (apart from Germany) had postal links with Austria either through shipping companies (the Austrian Lloyd or the Danube Steam Navigation Company - D.D.S.G.) or through Consular Offices. A brief survey of some of the material shown follows.

Postal Services.

In addition to services provided by the D.D.S.G., another shipping company, T.B. Morton & Co. of Constantinople, founded in 1855, once carried mail from that city to Rumania's Danube ports and the Black Sea. A service was provided from Constantinople via Burgas, Varna, and Constanza to Sulina, Tulcea, Galatz and Braila: see the accompanying maps, on which note that most towns have their 21st century names.

In 1869 the company began to issue crude handstamps on coloured paper, the colour indicating the mail's destination. For Galatz and Tulcea, magenta paper was used; blue-green for Braila. The ½ piastre was stamped in blue ink, the 1 piastre in red. There was a second issue in July 1869 incorporating the outline of a ship above the word FRANCO.



In the next two years, rectangular perforated lithographed stamps appeared in sheets of 50 with values of ½, 1 and 2 piastre for use on letter mail, bearing the initials D. & B.S.L.S. (Danube and Black Sea Line of Steamers) as well as a reference to T.B. Morton & Co.



For journals, a special stamp was issued in 1872, in sheets of 72, with a value of 10 paras (ie ¼ piastre: 40 paras = 1 piastre according to S.G.).



To avoid the lengthy journey through the Danube delta where navigational and political problems were inclined to arise, the DDSG organised an overland route between the Rumanian port of Czernavoda (now Cernavoda) and Constanza (now Kustendje) on the Black Sea.

In 1860, a British-owned railway link was built along the route. Special stamps were issued by the railway for mail it carried. The originals were lithographed in blue-green, and inscribed D.B.S.R. (Danube and Black Sea Railway). Later, reprints were made on various coloured papers (the illustrated specimen is on pale lilac).



Also within this region, mail carried on Rumanian vessels between about 1890 and 1914 would receive a pictorial cancellation in the form of a steamer showing the date and service involved.

Further up river, the much smaller Serbian Shipping Company (S.B.D.) carried local mail between Serbian ports on the Danube and Sava rivers. Forgeries and reprints abound, and genuinely used material is hard to find.

War

On 29th July 1914, the First World War began with the firing of a salvo from monitors of the Austrian Danube Flotilla directed at Belgrade. For the remainder of the war, vessels of the flotilla remained active patrolling the river, clearing mines and other obstructions and supporting the army commanders in military operations. Items of mail from these ships generally received F.P.O. cancellations although a few ships (eg the Enns, a twin-turret monitor, shown below) had their own dated postmarks. Mail from shore bases usually received the local town cancellation.





This Feldpost card was sent from S.M.S. Inn, another twin-turret monitor, to Bohemia, on 15 April 1915 when she was based at Petrovaradin. The 2-line Hungarian endorsement indicates free postage for the armed services.



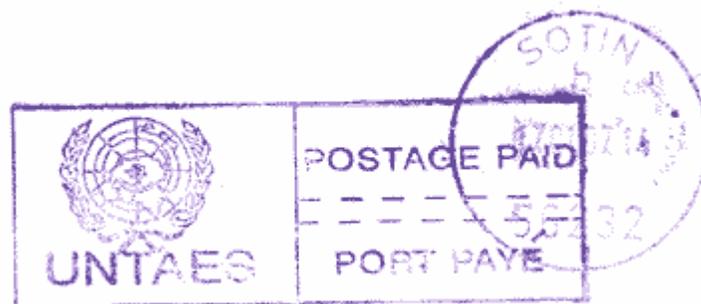
In February 1917 Braila fell, giving the Central Powers control of the Danube. The picture is of a pontoon bridge-building exercise on the Danube.



This field post card was sent by a member of 4/1 Bridge Company on 28 April 1917; FPO299 operated in Rumania between August 1916 and November 1918.

In WWII, river units formed part of Germany's armed forces and material from them is quite scarce.

More recent events in Yugoslavia have given rise to items illustrating the contestants' changing fortunes as towns changed hands during the Bosnian campaign, followed by the 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo.



This postage paid mark was applied by UNTAES, the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia, which functioned from 10 May 1996 to 15 January 1998. The cover was sent from Sotin to Slunj, ie from a Serb-held area to Croatia, and in order to avoid the use of Serb-inspired postage stamps (which were unacceptable) was sent via UNTAES.



In the autumn of 1991, Vukovar was virtually destroyed by Yugoslav National Forces and Cetniks as they advanced into eastern Croatia. This registered letter of 12 June 1993 is prestamped Yugoslav stationery issued in 1993, with added adhesives of the Serb Republic of Krajina.



Yugoslavia subsequently issued a set of six stamps (in 1999) depicting bridges which had been bombed during the NATO campaign, the two at Novi Sad (formerly Peterwardein or Petrovaradin) resulting in the closure of the Danube as an international waterway.

Flooding

For many years, severe flooding by the Danube gave rise to increasing loss of life and heavy damage to property adjacent to the river as industrialisation developed. To meet the cost of counter-measures, funds were raised through the issue of bonds, usually in the form of an attractively designed document. Between 1870 and 1877, 32 million florins (or gulden; equivalent to £3M sterling in 1870s money - perhaps £500M today?) was raised in that way. The illustration is of a Loan Note for 100 Gulden, with at the top left a revenue

stamp for "5 GROSCHEN ODER 17½ KREUZER" cancelled at Breslau, then in Germany and now in Poland.



Six countries have issued special stamps to raise funds for Danube flood relief. Hungary led the way in 1913 with a set of 17 stamps (1900 definitives, with a special label attached), Austria in 1921 (20 definitives in new colours, with overprints), Yugoslavia in 1926 (12 definitives, surcharged) and Bulgaria in 1939 (4 definitives, surcharged). Thereafter specially designed stamps were

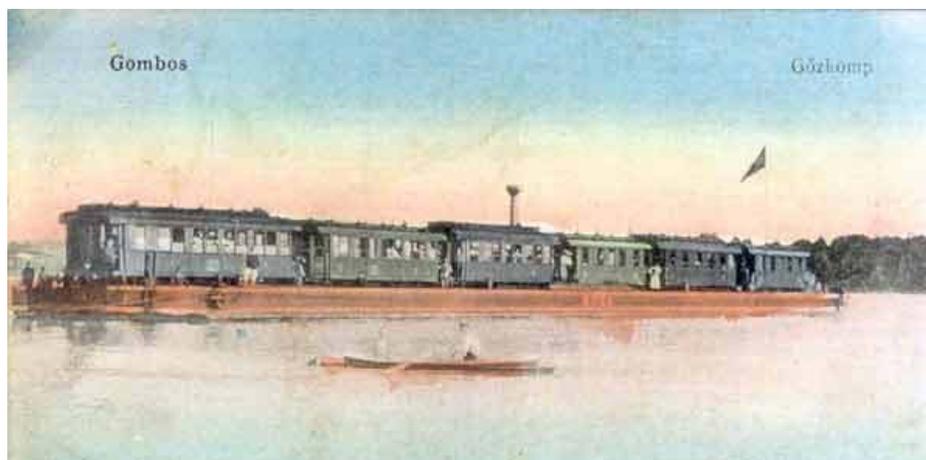


issued by Hungary (1940, 1965, 1997), Czechoslovakia (1965) and Rumania (1970). There is a bronze relief on the outside of the Franciscan Church in the Inner City of Budapest, showing Miklos Wesselenyi rescuing people from the floods of 13 March 1838; it featured on one of a pair of Hungarian stamps issued in 1965 to raise funds for flood relief.



Bygones

Pictures of the transportation of an entire train across the Danube by steam ferry and of passengers crossing the river by chain ferry remind us that something has been lost in the search for speedier transport and the construction of bridges.



Train on cross-river ferry at Gombos



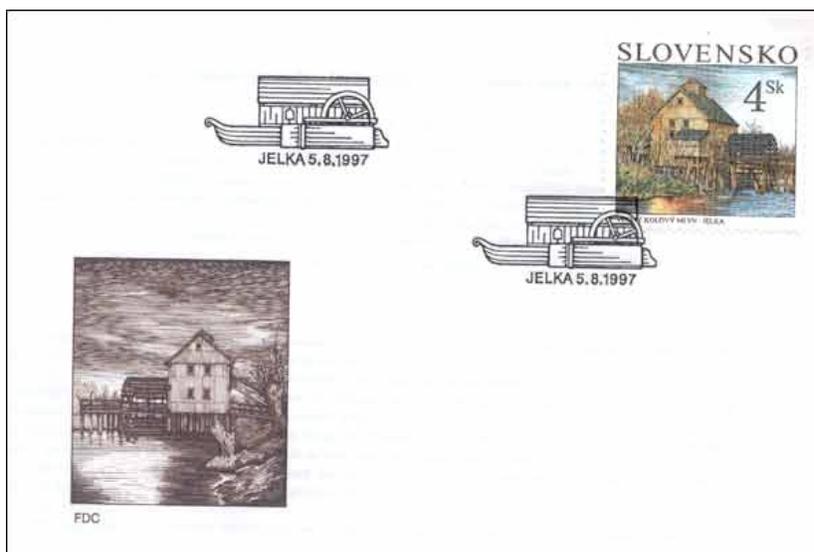
Unloading waggons at Dalj. The locomotive, number 3087, was built in Austria



This postcard was sent from Trismauer, a small village on the Traisen (a tributary of the Danube) 60km west of Vienna. A chain ferry across the Danube was opened on 29 August 1905. [Not so, said a later letter!]



The ferry at Traismauer



The Danube's strong currents were once used to drive machinery installed on water mills moored in the river. By the 1880s their number had become such a hazard to shipping that their presence was banned. One such mill at Jelka was transferred to the river bank and rebuilt, where it operated until

1951. It became a cultural monument in 1983 and appeared on a 1997 Slovakian stamp.

The completion in 1971 by Yugoslavia and Rumania of the Djerdap Dam, a mammoth barrage across the Danube, resulted in the submerging of many historically important sites. The original town of Orsova is now submerged; it was once the last station on the railway from Hungary to Rumania, and a busy port where the Danube steamers moored overnight before venturing upstream into the treacherous Kazan defile. A new town, bearing the same name, has

been built 5km lower down the river at the mouth of the River Czerna, but many of the historical features of the original have gone for ever. However, several items dating back to Roman times were re-sited at higher levels before the waters rose.



Old Orsova



The card shows the port facilities of the Hungarian M.F.T.R. steamship company. During WWI, units of the Danube Flotilla including the Base Ship 'Hebe' were based here; her cachet is illustrated.



This card shows the new town of Orsova. The Rumanian stamp celebrates the Danube as a European navigational resource.

Environment



This stamp was issued to commemorate the setting up of the Danube Meadows Nature Park alongside the river just to the east of Vienna. Following a public outcry at a proposal to build a hydroelectric power station at Hainburg, a project was created to protect wildlife on the river between Vienna and the border with Slovakia. Orth an der Donau, where the stamp was cancelled, stands at the mid-point of the National Park; it dates back to the Neolithic and became a parish in the 12th century.

Retrospect

The foregoing material provides only a glimpse of the wide range of Danube-related subjects that are available. In philatelic terms, the spread is from pre-stamp covers with Danubian cancellations to recent issues depicting, for example, shipbuilding at Komarno, 1768 km from the sea.



It is of interest to note that in the pioneering days of the nineteenth century there was a strong British contribution to developments along the Danube. In Austria the first steamship company on the river and the giant wheel in Vienna's Prater park were British backed, as was the first permanent bridge over the river at Budapest and its adjacent tunnel, the first railway in Bulgaria (which linked Rouse [ie Roustchouk or PYCE] on the Danube with the Black Sea port of Varna) as well as the Danube and Black Sea railway, mentioned earlier.

Research has shown that by the late 1800s some 70 per cent of ships entering the Danube were British owned.



[Postcard of Rousek]





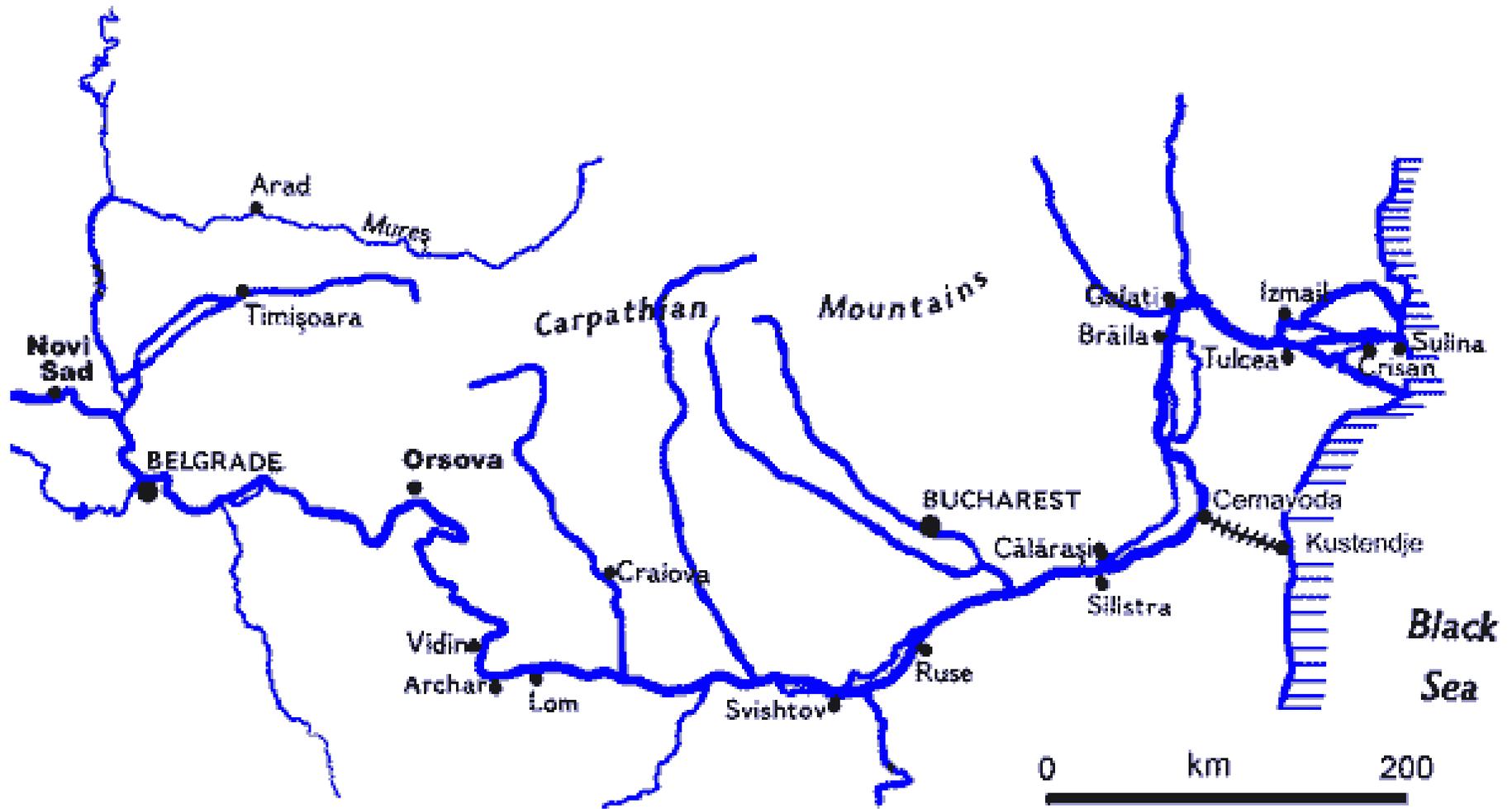
Donaueschingen. Donaueschingen 675 m ü. M. bis zum Meer 2840 Kilometer.

The waters of the River Brigach and those of the Danube Spring (shown above) join those of the River Breg beneath the town of Donaueschingen to form the Danube proper.

On a personal note, after a lifetime engaged with the finer points of Austrian philately (most of which has now been dispersed) there remains much satisfaction within the simpler realms of a thematic collection devoted to Europe's second largest river. (The largest is the Volga, since you ask: 2300 miles)

Maps of the Danube:





NOTES from YORKFEST 2000

By Andy Taylor

These are limited to what the Editor can read of what he could write; any Yorkfester who feels her or his contribution is inadequately recorded is invited to work with me to create an illustrated article based on what was displayed!

Geoff Frost: Not in Gibbons either

Geoff displayed a wide range of interesting and uncommon material none of which is in Gibbons, although some is in ANK - stumme stempel (dumb cancels); 10 h. Galician court stamps; Austrian and Bosnian postal stationery proofs (allegedly ex UPU via Portugal); Empress Elizabeth labels; telephone stamps and stationery; 1917 patriotic labels; 1945 Losentein locals; 1945 Scheibbs locals; Austrian POWs in USA 1946; 1948 Verrechnungsmarke stamps; used black prints; and 1854 Austrian transit markings

John Whiteside: 1900-1918 parcel post oddities

Many unusual points were made and exemplified. Those offices with the franking privilege also had tax-free parcel cards. "SP" on a parcel card means "Sperrig", ie one dimension is too big (the example was a card for a surveyor's tripod!). In Bosnia & Herzegowina, the parcel card tax was 4Kr (later 8H), not 5Kr, until 1918, possibly because of the widespread use of Turkish currency. The Revenue service switched from Kreuzer to Heller in 1898, so cards used in 1899 have the tax in Heller but the postage in Kreuzer! The Etappengebiet used military parcel cards, with revenue stamps added for the tax; however FPOs were tax-free. The oddly-valued overprints such as "43 Centesimi on 40 Heller" arose because the local currency was aligned with the French Franc, which was then worth about 96% of a Kreuzer.

Andy Taylor: The 1916-1918 issue

Andy showed mainly stamps, particularly the size and paper variations in the higher values



Colin Tobitt: The Allied Occupation 1945-1955

Full-size display of the subject.

Alan Berrisford: Cracow

Full-size display of the subject.

James Hooper: Tag der Briefmarke

A wide-ranging display from the earliest to this year's issues (thus pre-empting the Editor's second display!)

Henry White: Postcards 1925-1939

We saw mainly the postal stationery with imprinted stamps. Some have pictures; the picture is usually constant in colour while the stamp varies widely, showing that they were printed in two operations. Earlier cards have a single-headed eagle, later ones a double.

Gordon Rogers: Music



This thematic display showed how the extensive musical life of Austria is reflected in its stamps, depicting composers, performers, venues, and patrons

Joyce Boyer: Tirol Werbestempeln

This display showed slogan cancellations from the Tirol; Joyce had been inspired to acquire these by the Innsbruck Stamp Club's newly-issued book on this subject.

Hans Smith: Bocce de Cattaro

This is in Dalmatia, and contains many important frontier towns and harbour fortresses. Hans showed a selection of covers from the various towns around the bay (eg Cattaro, Castelnuovo) many with registration and other markings.

Geoff Richardson: 1938-1945 slogans

These were the machine cancels, with a rectangular message area alongside the circular date stamp. There is an ASCGB booklet listing these, and a few copies are left - apply to Geoff!

Andy Taylor - Kitzbuhel revisited

This was a greatly expanded version of Andy's ongoing collection; he had acquired much new material, as well as increased knowledge of how to classify and arrange it. Unfortunately this had also dramatically expanded his Wants List! Perhaps in say 2006 there will be less gaps?

John Whiteside: Genesis of the Parcel Card

Ausgabe-Journal Nr.

Nachnahme-Postanweisung auf **K h**

in Worten **K h**

An

Bestimmungsort

Straße und Hausnummer

Understanding the rates and markings on Parcel Cards is fraught with problems! The weight of the parcel was measured in Pfund, the equivalent in grams of which varied from place to place. On 1st Jan 1863, a tax was introduced on "documents connected with third-party transfer of goods", including items sent by mail, rail, or ship. Complete COD forms (Nachnahme-Postanweisung) are only found used if the goods were refused. COD also had a "provision": a fee payable by the recipient of 3Kr per 5Gulden (up to 50 Gulden value; 2Kr per 5Gu above) with a minimum of 6Kr. The small label on a parcel card (see page 9 of this issue) was part of a much larger label which went on the parcel itself.

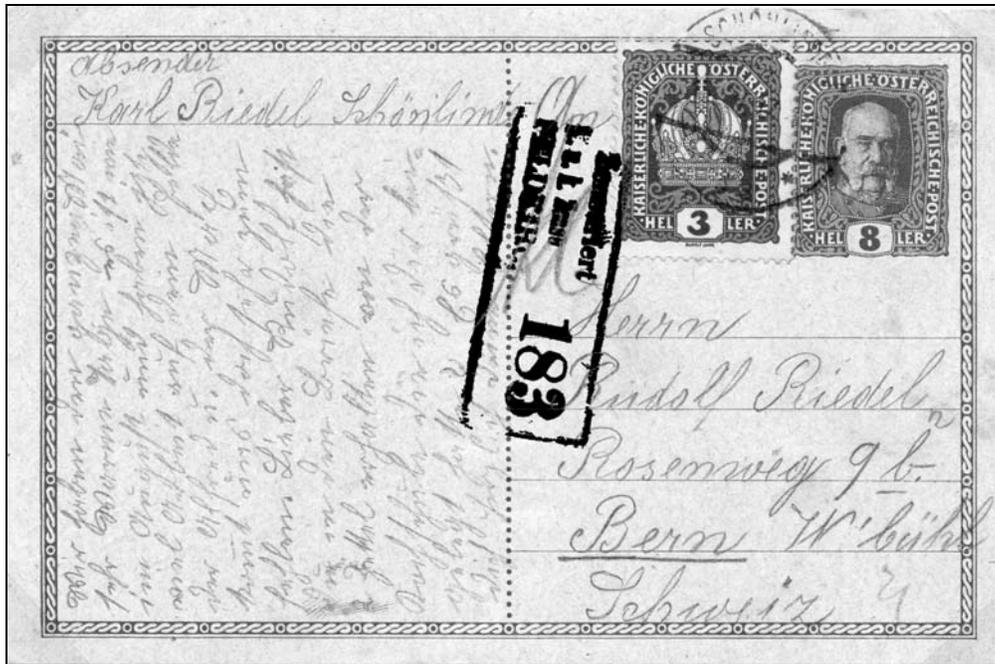
Alan Berrisford: Bukowina

A remote province, with little correspondence except from Czernowitz the capital. Material is not riotously expensive but is very rare!

Martin Brumby: Recent Acquisitions

Included revenue stamps on theatre advertisements; newspapers with signets; and postage stamps correctly used fiscally.

James Hooper: WWI Censor Marks



A wide range thereof!

Brian Presland: POW Mail

POW mail from many combinations of nationalities and locations.

WIPA Goodies

There was only one exhibit, from Andy Taylor, who showed a FDC of the special Automatenmarke; the 2-by-2 blue/blackprint of the "150 years" stamp; the WIPA1981 souvenir sheet with VÖPh's "WIPA2000" overprint; and the Hundertwasser souvenir sheet. Here's the blueprint; the others have already appeared in these pages: see 'Austria' 131 pp 3-6.



Joyce Boyer: Postablagen of the Oetz Valley

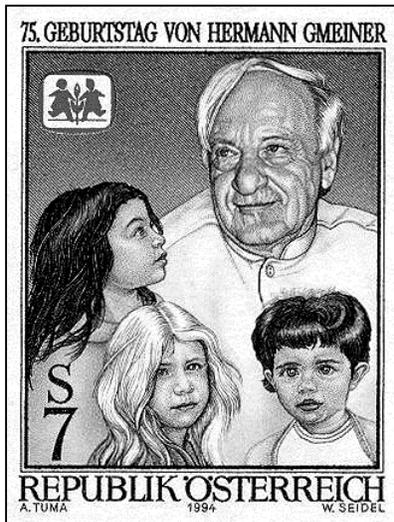
Last year I showed a few examples of my collection of Postablagen cancels from the Oetz Valley and had expected that few items would be added to it. On my first visit to the Innsbruck Stamp Club this year I was asked if I was interested in Postablagen cancels and I said Yes. I was then asked if I knew what they were, and my reply of 'Mountain hut and village cancellations' obviously satisfied them because the next week a number of items were produced; these form the basis of this display.

I have been able to add some new villages to the collection together with earlier and/or different cancellations for other villages. There were 26 postablagen in the Oetz valley at different times and I now have examples from 16 of these. However the collection is still a long way from being complete in respect of the early varieties. I have examples of most modern (with numbers) cancellations; one follows.



A postablagen was established in the village of Niederthei in 1902 with the post entering the main system at Umhausen. In 1955 the spelling of the village name was changed to Niederthai. The envelope has an example of the cancellation of Niederthei über Umhausen which was used for a few months in 1944. This envelope was addressed to the Kinderlandverschickung (KLV) at the Pension Hochland at Seefeld. The KLV were generally hotels and guesthouses where schools evacuated from Northern Germany were housed during the war years. I believe those staying at Pension Hochland came from a girls High School. [See the Innsbruck Club's third Festschrift, described on page 42 of Austria 131.]

The People on Austrian Stamps: Addendum 197



Gmeiner, Hermann SG2378 - 1994

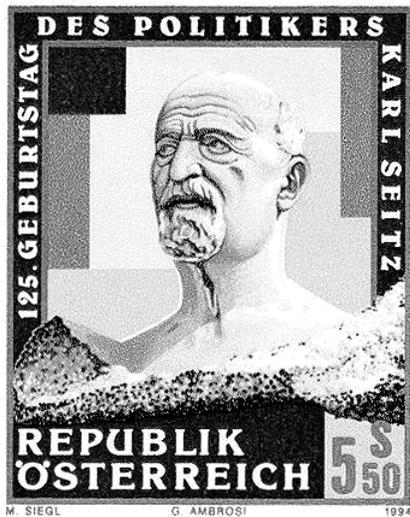
Hermann Gmeiner was born on 23rd June 1919 at Alberschwende in the Vorarlberg. His father was a prosperous farmer, but his mother died in 1921 after the birth of her ninth child Anton, leaving his eldest sister Elsa to bring up the family. Elsa thus personified for Hermann the ideal of a "Children Village Mother", the central point of the later "SOS Children Village". Hermann was sent to the local village school, and displayed such aptitude that he won a scholarship to the High School in Feldkirch. Then, in 1946, he decided to study medicine at the University of Innsbruck, with the intention of becoming a paediatrician. However, at the same time, he was most active in youth welfare, and conceived the idea of founding an SOS Children Village to provide a refuge for orphaned or deserted children.

After much thought, and using his entire savings of 600 Austrian schillings, he founded the SOS Children Village Association in 1949; the foundation stone for the first such village was laid that year at Imst in Tirol. This enterprise took up so much of the time of Hermann Gmeiner that he had to abandon his medical studies, but he was able to inaugurate similar villages in France and Germany.

In 1963, after the Korean War, the first village outside Europe was founded at Daegu in Korea, and this led to villages in Asia, Latin America and Africa. In 1964 he became the President of SOS Children Village International to combine all the national organisations of this project.

Each village contains 15 to 20 family houses and each house has a "Mother" responsible for the 5 to 8 children of various ages therein. The stress is upon providing a family atmosphere, as his sister provided for Hermann when he was a child. For the remainder of his life, until his death on 26th April 1986, Hermann Gmeiner devoted himself to his concept. His successor was his closest friend, Helmut Kulin, who had worked with him for many years. Hermann Gmeiner was buried at the village in Imst.

The People on Austrian Stamps: Addendum 198



Seitz, Karl SG2379 - 1994

Karl Seitz was born on 4th September 1869 in Vienna. He was the son of Karl Seitz, a timber merchant, and of the latter's wife Elizabeth. Due to the premature death of his father the young Karl was placed in an orphanage, but displayed such intellectual promise that he was granted a state stipend to enter a teacher's training college. There, when he had qualified and was appointed as a young teacher, he started a teachers' movement called "die Jungen" (the Young) and involved himself in a struggle for the liberalisation of school laws and the

improvement of the social rights of teachers. His political views led him to join the Social Democratic Party and he won the parliamentary constituency of Florisdorf for them in 1901. When universal (male?) suffrage was conceded in 1907, the influence and seats in the Reichsrat of the Social Democrats, of which Karl Seitz now became a party secretary, increased very significantly.

During the First World War, he was a pacifist and demanded the rapid conclusion of a peace treaty by Austria and Hungary. Upon the proclamation of the First Austrian Republic in 1918, he served as the president of the provisional National Assembly. In 1919 he was elected as the President of the Nationalrat and served until 1920 as the first Head of State. Also in 1918 he succeeded Viktor Adler as Chairman of the Social Democratic Party. Between 1923 and 1934, Karl Seitz was the Mayor of Vienna and implemented a highly ambitious communal programme. His "Red Vienna" became a model of municipal development.

After the coup d'etat of the Christian Socialists in 1934, he was arrested and imprisoned and again, when the Nazis seized power in 1938, he refused to swear loyalty to Hitler. Indeed, after the unsuccessful assassination attempt on Hitler in 1944 he was imprisoned in Ravensbruck, only returning to Vienna in June 1945. He again became a member of parliament and chairman of his party. His health was by now very poor, and he died in Vienna on 3rd February 1950.

Bark, Bark.

Andy Taylor

Recently, several specimens of "postcards" made from wood, bark, or slices of trees have passed through member's hands. I illustrate four here, more for your delight and delectation than any implication of a major philatelic discovery. A member recently retired from a military career assures me that such items are typically what Gefreiterstellvertreter Schweik might do while awaiting Orders.

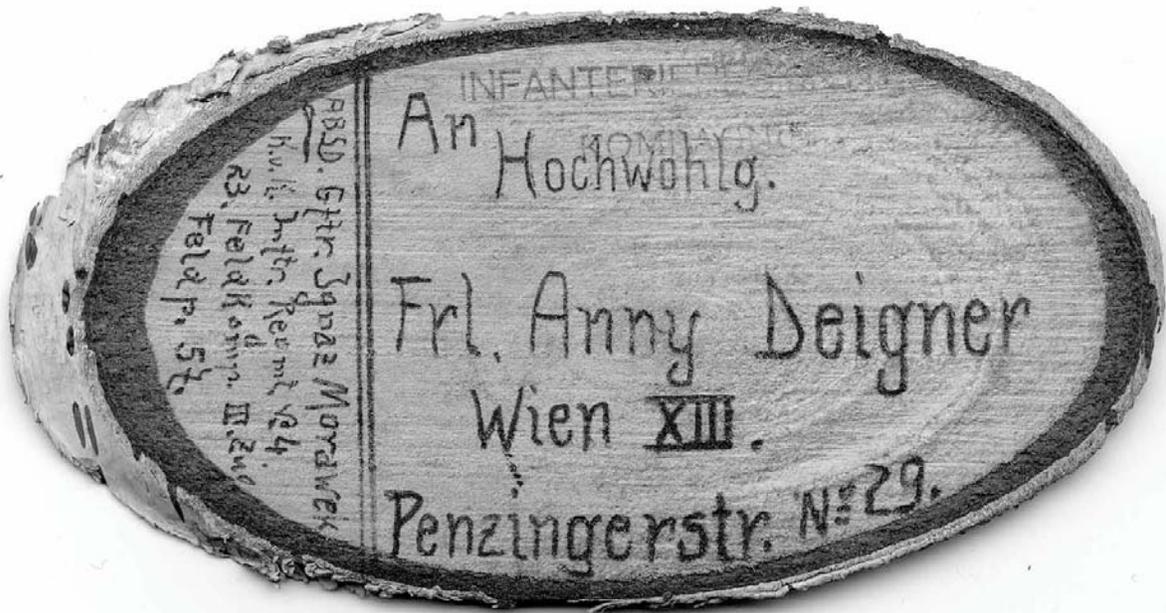
The first specimen is on a piece of birch bark. As far as can be made out, the cancel reads: K.U.K. FELDPOSTAMT / 30.VII.15 / 203. The cachet reads: K.u.K. Kommando des D.O. Verwindeten-Sp?ak Nr.3. It was sent to: Herrn Theodor Quereser / Steuermatrosse / S.M.Sch. „Erzh. Friedrich" / Pola / Marinefeldpostamt. The sender was: Ferd. Quereser / Trainsoldat / D.R.O.V. Sqn. No.3 / Feldpost 56. The vertical lines are the pattern of the bark!

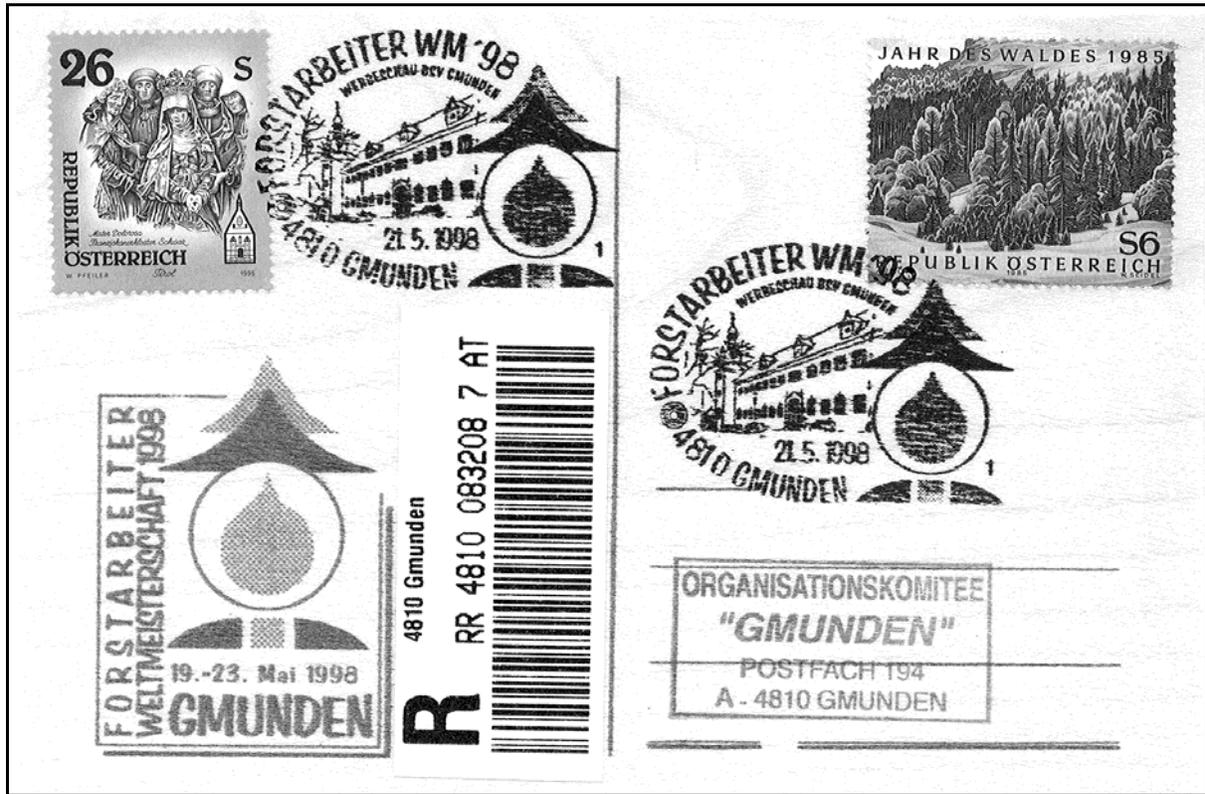
The second specimen is again on a piece of flimsy birch bark, this time with the pattern horizontal. The "Feldpostkarte" and the chain-dotted lines appear to have been burned on to the bark - perhaps a die had been made in the unit workshop! It is addressed to "Foiuth Antalne" (?) at Temesvar Gyarnaros in Hungary; the sender is "Foiuth Antal" (is this a husband writing home, although the back is blank) from Mili Arb Abt 5/61 Feldpost 58. There is a clear black cancel TABORI POSTAHIVATAL / 916 JAN 18 / 58 and an indistinct violet cachet "..K.Infanteri ..ment.." with something inside it.

The third item is a diagonally-cut slice of a birch tree branch about 2" diameter. The Easter Greetings side carries parts of a circular cancel for 9.IV.16; the address side a cachet INFANTERIEREGIMENT / KOMPAGNIE..".

The final item is on a piece of I think pine, and was produced for a Forestry exhibition held at Gmunden on 21 May 1998.







Wood comes from trees...



A Further Thought about Ferchenbauer 2000

Henry O. Pollak

In Austria No 131, Andy Taylor has given an excellent summary of the contents of this new catalog and handbook. He has in particular indicated the vast coverage and the richness of the illustrations. Since the book weighs almost 3 kilos, he suggests that it would be cheaper to buy it than to borrow it more than twice from the Club Library. My purpose is to suggest that you buy it, independently of any other practical considerations.

The longer you study any particular field, the better your eye becomes. As a mathematician, I can hope to look at a complicated expression, and see its structure, its implications, and possible avenues of attack almost at once. A chess expert, I am told, or a serious musician, sees a similar whole, while I would see only individual pieces or notes, and would wonder how they might fit together. The value of Ferchenbauer's handbook, more than any other book on Austrian philately that I can remember, is that it will train your eye so that you will see what a stamp or a cover might imply in all its aspects. This book is not just for looking up an individual item, but also for browsing almost at random, and for increasing the depth and richness of what you see. I could even imagine it as bedtime reading - if only it didn't weigh 3 kilos!

Let me give you just a few examples. I have wondered at various times just what the different colors of the first issue actually look like: what's a lemon yellow and a silver gray and a deep rose red? I've never before had all of the shades next to each other so that I could make my own mental associations, and greatly improve my chances of knowing what I'm looking at the next time somebody asks me, or offers me a copy. I've wondered what the so-called Friedl Forgeries of the rare newspaper stamps looked like, in fact I thought I had a few, but I've never seen a number of them illustrated together, except in a recent Öphila auction catalog, and in Ferchenbauer. I've wondered how to compute the rates on express covers, how deliveries outside a specified district were actually paid for, and I've never seen so many interesting covers from the Austrian Offices in the Levant all in once place. Hey, maybe with these excellent colour illustrations I'll even have a chance to figure out which reprint is which!

One last comment: The difference between the letter post, which is the Briefpost, and the waggon or road mail, the Fahrpost, is really difficult to get the hang of. One learns that parcels and money orders and COD mail and money letters are in the Fahrpost, but only by studying the whole chapter on the Fahrpost does the picture begin to make sense as a whole. And it certainly is worth understanding. A money letter in the Fahrpost with a 2 kronen 1899 is nice, and catalogs 215 euros - not bad - but a heavy foreign letter with a 2 kronen 1899 in the Briefpost is very rare, and catalogs 1200 euros! It is nice to be able to see the difference!

I had better stop before my enthusiasm runs away with me. The pleasure in owning and browsing through this book will be really great.